

THINKING BACK THROUGH OUR MOTHERS:
VIRGINIA WOOLF IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN
FEMININE IMAGINATION

By

MÓNICA AYUSO-VENTIMIGLIA

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1994

Copyright 1994

by

Mónica Ayuso-Ventimiglia

Para mis padres,
quienes alentaron el devenir de
mi ambición aunque
no siempre la comprendieron.

Y para Juan Ignacio
cuya presencia misma
la mantiene viva.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In order to give thanks to the many who have helped me write this dissertation, I must go back a few years. Indeed, the process did not coincide with the day I started writing it but with a time when diverse circumstances made a vision clear to me. I am not exactly sure when or how I got the first glimpse of its emerging contour.

Undoubtedly, I owe Jacksonville Sister Cities Association the materialization of my graduate school dream here in the United States. Under their auspices I had a home in Jacksonville, a presidential scholarship to the University of North Florida, jobs at Jacksonville University, and, later, a visiting professorship to Florida Community College at Jacksonville that afforded me financial momentum to continue my work—I am not exaggerating when I say—two full years. Their support, interest, and encouragement have been invaluable.

I am completely indebted to my teachers at the University of Florida who served on my dissertation committee. Thanks go to Daniel Cottom for joining the project late, after Barry Ruth Straus left it. Thanks go to John Perlette for his advice that I work on the rhetorical

fuzziness of my first efforts. I hear his commands every time I write. Thanks go to Alistair Duckworth for providing one of the earliest positive role models of teaching and scholarship. Thanks go to Gregory Ulmer who, as a keen theorist and prior comparatist himself, expressed his enthusiasm as to the intertextual buttress of this work even at a time when "influence" did not have as negative a reception as it does today. Thanks go to Andrés Avellaneda, who was the first to give a name—"philological"—to my obsession with language. And thanks especially to Brandon Kershner whose example as scholar, advisor, and teacher touched all aspects of my intellectual growth in the last few years. He intervened on my behalf a number of times, but most decisively, when acts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service threatened to jeopardize the completion of my project.

I am equally indebted to those friends with whom I shared a six-year love of running (among other things), especially to John and Susan Duss as well as John and Linda Whitten. We have seen many dawns and storms together; we have tackled many bridges and beaches together. With them I learned that the world of athletics, like that of academics,

calls for discipline, endurance, schedules, and will-power so that somehow what I learned in one has dynamically helped me in the other.

Finally, I thank a group of friends who feel like family now. Thanks go to Sherryl Wilson and her sons Langston, Jordan, and Griffin for giving Juan Ignacio a home always but especially in the summer of 1993. With their help Juan Ignacio could finish first grade in the school where he had begun it, and I could relocate in Gainesville to teach. Thanks go to Edna Stringer for her interest and for the use of her computer and printer. Thanks go to her daughter, Renée S. Bullard, for her enviable literacy in their use. Finally, I thank Sue W. Griffin, who saw potential in me first as a baffled international student and always relentlessly encouraged me to actualize it. She kept my vision alive and, when I was perilously close to losing it, she helped me regain it anew. For no less than fourteen years now, Mrs. Griffin has opened the doors of her home wide to Juan Ignacio and me. She pushed me to write; she read everything I ever wrote with the toughness of the purist; and she enlightened me—sometimes wordlessly—in ways only a bilingual octogenarian could. Most important,

she reassured me that Juan Ignacio would manage to grow and to thrive, too, in spite of living in the vertiginous ambient of a writer (and thrive he has). This dissertation would have been literally inconceivable without her wise support.

PREFACE

This project originates in a desire to unite the two halves of my background. Those two halves were artificially kept apart throughout my formative years in Argentina. Simultaneously, I learned two languages; I attended two different schools. The worlds of Spanish and English never intermingled. Translation had long been banned from my second-language classroom since the most successful learning conditions approximated real-life scenarios of language acquisition. As a result, Spanish was blocked. In one sense, the method succeeded: I became bilingual and bi-cultural. In another sense, in the process of gaining one language, I lost the other. I cannot count myself among those who, like María Granata, fell in love with their native language from the start (132). Rather, I fall among the ranks of those who tarry. Not until many years later did I cultivate my Spanish-American heritage.

Like any other lengthy undertaking, this one has had more than its fair share of false starts, halts, and swerves. If I had to draw its starting line, I would broadly designate a contemporary British literature class I took twenty-odd years ago when, as a senior in college, I

read Virginia Woolf for the first time. Early she proved to be the writer on whom I wanted to concentrate my graduate efforts. I remember the puzzlement and the delight with which I first pored over her last and perhaps most challenging creation, The Waves. Narrowly speaking, I would call that the moment in which I chose a topic for this dissertation. At that time, both chair and co-chair—concurrently but separately—suggested I capitalize on a background I had by virtue of my birth. This veering of direction involved acquainting myself with a Latin-American canon paradoxically new to me. During the next few years I researched most of its emerging women's voices, not surprisingly bi-lingual and tri-lingual themselves. Then, I more finely adjusted the focus of my interest. I would position myself precisely at the nexus afforded by two linguistic worlds/perspectives. I would search for relationships between the British feminist and three or four of her Spanish-American daughters, a task never extensively attempted before, with the exception of sparse critical references to the impact of Woolf on this side of the Atlantic and a few essays by the novelists themselves who wrote on the importance of having read her. I hoped to

enlarge the dialogue between the two worlds, which was linear and unilateral until very recently.

Even though the project was never met with less than enthusiasm from both inside and outside my committee, the choice of Spanish-American women was the most trying task. Trying but immensely rewarding since their texts, appearing in the mid-seventies, obviously pointed the direction—I then believed and since then have confirmed—of things to come. For instance, their translations and adaptations were undertaken almost as I wrote. In a sense, these texts confronted me as much as I confronted them. To my knowledge only Brazilian-born Clarice Lispector and Argentine-born Victoria Ocampo had been the object of article-length studies linking them with Woolf. I combed the canon for justifications that would invite comparisons: lifetime exposure to Woolf's aesthetics; knowledge of her work; similarities of technique and subject; primary political interest in a female-centered world; a feminist persuasion. After a revitalizing immersion in texts of my time that spoke eloquently to me, reaffirming my experience as Latin-American woman, I chose a corpus of three writers, representing different countries: Rosario Ferré (Puerto

Rico), Julieta Campos (Cuba/Mexico), and Sylvia Molloy (Argentina). I have chosen rather daringly. Ferré has serious reservations about Woolf's theories; there is sufficient reason to believe that Campos would cringe at being designated a feminist (Mujeres 125), and Molloy has admitted to being captivated by the wit and intelligence of Woolf the essayist, but put off by the lyricism of Woolf the novelist.

Ever since that moment (wherever it may have been is immaterial to the process), when I first had a bilateral viewpoint I have learned that I was not running through the wilderness alone; my ambivalence over linguistic worlds and the values thereof has been fully shared by many Spanish-Americans before me. Leaving difficulties (theoretical and other) aside, the crossroad at which I stand this day is an open field in Women's Studies. Bilingual writers—such as all three—on whom I have chosen to focus are more frequently read. The days in which one could not teach writers other than those canonized by the "boom" (the authenticity of the phenomenon notwithstanding), simply because their writing was not translated into English, are over. Now those writers, no longer ghettoized, often make

their work available through their own translations. Through this gesture they transport the colonial text from the margins to the center of the cultural surroundings. Nobody is better suited to do that. As post-colonial subjects, their gaze is turned in two directions. They become the first interpreters of the profoundly ambiguous situation they find themselves in. On the critical front, a multiplicity of voices is heard. Heterogeneity is recognized, and cultural identity theorized. In spite of my detours, this project inserts itself rather opportunely into a critical moment rife with multi-lingual dialogue.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
PREFACE	viii
ABSTRACT	xiv
CHAPTERS	
1 CON-TEXTS	1
Notes	28
2 STRATEGIC BROWSING: ROSARIO FERRÉ VISITS VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MANIFESTOES	30
Notes	77
3 REMOTE INSCRIPTIONS: <u>TO THE LIGHTHOUSE</u> AND <u>THE WAVES</u> IN JULIETA CAMPOS' CARIBBEAN	79
Notes	120
4 TEXTUAL DETOURS: FROM SYLVIA MOLLOY'S <u>CERTIFICATE OF ABSENCE</u> TO WOOLF'S <u>BETWEEN THE ACTS</u>	122
Notes	154
5 CONCLUSION	155
REFERENCES	158
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	169

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THINKING BACK THROUGH OUR MOTHERS:
VIRGINIA WOOLF IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN
FEMININE IMAGINATION

By

Mónica Ayuso-Ventimiglia

December 1994

Chair: Brandon Kershner
Major Department: English

This study, which applies an intertextual, interdisciplinary approach, is a description of the impact of Virginia Woolf on the work of three contemporary Spanish-American women writers as well as an evaluation of current theories of intertextuality applied to the heterogeneous field of Spanish-America. First, Rosario Ferré in Eros Besieged (1986) glosses over "Professions for Women" and A Room of One's Own. The Woolfian texts provide a pad from which to launch an attack on the objectification of women within the historical context of the demise of the Puerto Rican agrarian economy and the struggle for identity on an island divided by the stalemated debate of its future

status. Second, Julieta Campos inscribes Woolf's To the Lighthouse and The Waves in She Has Reddish Hair and Her Name is Sabina (1993). Within discursive context dominated by male figures—especially that of Borges—the chapter discusses the development of a model of gendered subjectivity drawn from Woolf. Finally, Sylvia Molloy's Certificate of Absence (1989) represents a search for a lesbian textual practice within a tradition characterized either by the paucity or the inadequacy of models available and discusses the possibility of narrativizing a homosexual identity and a textual practice with Woolf's Between the Acts as precedent.

This dissertation extends the limits of previous studies—those intuiting, but seldom crafting, the possibility of considering Woolf as a textual foremother and those encouraging the links between Woolf and women who read her work and admired it but wrote in a language other than English.

CHAPTER ONE

CON-TEXTS

Our deepest feminist beliefs may be swept away by new grids of writing and desire—within which, no doubt, the feminine will remain a metaphor and the maternal a secret, but differently.

Alice Jardine, Gynesis

One of the theoretical hurdles that any study involving Latin America has to overcome is the complex and knotted nature of the construct itself. The ethnic, political, linguistic, and cultural scope of the concept is so vast that it cannot be encompassed in a single homogeneous referent. For instance, an otherwise successful seminar conducted in the mid-eighties and published under the title La Literatura Latinoamericana como Proceso (1985) presented a fallacious projection while trying to define the field and ways of approaching it. This study grouped Portuguese and French with Spanish speaking countries. Efforts such as this one sweepingly homogenize the heterogeneous. Even "within" a linguistically consistent world, reality is seldom cohesive. Hugo Achúgar, for example, maintains that within Latin America we find many points of view—ranging from that of the director of a foreign company located in

Caracas to that of a Guatemalan Indian toiling on a high mountain—as to what Latin America is and what it is expected to be in the future ("Notas para un debate" 3-18). Beatriz Sarlo, as well, identifies different degrees of "Latinamericanness" or of a sense of belonging to the construct thus named. According to her, Argentina is the least Latin-American of Latin-American countries, and Mexico the most (La literatura latinoamericana 79). I vouch for the fact that most Argentines consider their country (and proudly so) a piece of Europe in America. In fact, of all the countries in Latin America, Argentina is the one with the strongest European heritage. The implications of Latin heterogeneity are great; there are almost as many Latin Americas as there are Latin-American countries and the varied regions thereof. Each country produces works that cannot be said to purchase directly on that Latin-American reality—not even those that claim to be the most anchored in the real. Rather, each work builds a second referent out of an ideological interpretation of reality, so that Latin America is not the geography, the continent, the politics, the thing—but an ideological interpretation thereof in complex dynamics ("Escribir en Hispanoamérica" 105-7). To account for considerations like these—as relevant today as they were almost a century ago—José Martí appropriately defined Latin America as an ideological—rather than a linguistic or a geographic—construct. Spanish colonization

was not uniquely responsible for its creation. Had it been so the Portuguese of Brazil, the French and Dutch of the Antilles as well as the ethnic groups of Anglo-Saxon heritage in the Caribbean would have had no place within the concept. And they do. Because of that, Martí's definition prevails today; Latin America constitutes a "cultural entity" characterized by plural unity and not a geographical area limited strictly by linguistic considerations (La literatura latinoamericana 133). As such, the system of relationships that constitutes the construct is very dense, very complex, and very knotted. Henceforth, I will refer to this construct as Spanish-America because I am only concerned with writers of the Spanish language.

Any attempt at theorization must also account for the density of the construct. Studies of this type sometimes obliterate subtleties within a single language and try to homogenize. In most geographic areas, more than one register co-exist. Those registers are often placed on a continuum and measured quantitatively. This method, however, would gloss over the popular elements from tango music which appear in Borges in spite of his "refinement." The word "ciudad" (city) with the final "d" elided, typical of tango diction, appears in his poems during the "Criollista" period of the twenties because registers occur simultaneously. Any system that fragments the syncreticity of such manifestations must be deemed inadequate. This

premium on versatility is consistent with the recent post-colonial approach to linguistics which reaffirms the notion of language as a "practice." The post-colonial orientation abrogates the normal. Traditional theory posited an ideal speaker, who dealt with a grammatically consistent language, to the tyranny of which she adapted. Traditional theory subscribed to the purity of an essence and an ideal. Polydialectical theory, on the other hand, deals with language as human behavior; therefore, the linguistic variations generated by the performance of speakers are taken into account. Registers like the "ideal" Received Standard English are no longer held "central" nor are the rest pejoratively labelled "peripheral" (Ashcroft et al. 46-47).

The syncreticity of registers, evident in the writing of those with an unrivaled ear for the language that people in the street speak, can be captured by Bakhtin's dialogism. In this study of eclectic approaches, Bakhtin will be quoted often because he highlights precisely the diversity of social speech types. Certainly, Ferré's polyphony is different from the one Campos conjures because each deals with a different social culture. Both, however, foreground the great number of variants: "languages" of officialdom, vernaculars, occupational jargons, literary, and subliterary languages that characterize both written and spoken expression. But apart from making those languages heard,

Bakhtin theorizes on the struggle for predominance among them. In Ferré, for instance, English and Spanish are at war. Her text is in metonymic relation with her country; it is a part which plays out the tensions of the whole. Profoundly embedded in the contemporary historical moment, Ferré's text reveals the vulnerable position of her people.

Spanish-America harbors also an intrinsic dualism—that of Europe versus Spanish-America. Only recently scholars started questioning the supremacy of the Western point of view, one which equated its standards with the apex of cultural accomplishment. This dualism, inherent in the culture, is also present in the personal experience of Spanish-American writers. On the one hand, those of the so-called "boom" are known for their sometimes traumatic transfers from their native lands to different places of exile. On the other hand, even the least mobile writers have been early exposed to English and/or French as the language of "civilization." With Europe as its alien double, creative Spanish-America seems to be, in greater or lesser degree, torn between the values emanating from "national" or "international" centers of culture.

Sensitive to the effects of foreign influence as the intellectuals are, they still have reached little consensus on the construct called Latin America other than that of asserting that its phenomena need to be described with idiosyncratic methods. Still, the assertion is not enough.

In perspective today, we know that the "boom" of the sixties and seventies was in large part the result of clever international marketing, engineered by the centers of cultural domination. Today Latin-American scholarship is characterized by an acute self-consciousness about the critical paraphernalia which it uses. Already in the 1920s, the Peruvian critic José Carlos Mariátegui was arguing for a different periodization of the literature of Peru, one which differed from that of the European literary tradition. What he called the "special character" of Peruvian literature rejected the frameworks of European classificatory systems because they did not account for the development generated under colonial auspices ("Literature on Trial" 190-1). Some intellectuals have supported the idea of interrupting discussion of issues until inductive cultural histories of current societies are developed. The idea, though extreme, serves a useful function. It constantly calls for the assessment of methods and approaches that might be tinged with the dominant ideology. It also suggests the general parameters of a collective resistance to cultural imperialism. But, paradoxically, at the same time that intellectuals resent the use of foreign methods, considering them evidence of cultural imperialism, they actively seek recognition of their work among the foreign structures they distrust.

Spanish-American scholars reveal a preoccupation with the issue of antipodal influence because it is deeply ingrained in the dialectics of dominant versus dominated and civilization versus barbarism. Spanish-American writers, as well as critics, are extremely self-conscious about their sources of inspiration. For example, a bitter dispute existed (and, alas, in some circles it still does) in Argentina about Borges' attitude towards literature. In his famous essay "El Escritor Argentino y la Tradición" ["The Argentine Writer and Tradition"], Borges states the case for the "universalist" (which he is) who displays an allegiance—unconfined by territorial barriers—to literature in general. The "nationalists," on the other hand, are faithful to national themes and thus reflect historical and geographic interests. The nationalists (especially of the 1940s and 1950s) accuse the universalists of Eurocentricism, class-bias, and ignorance of cultural origins. In their eyes, Borges is nothing more than a defender of bourgeois and aristocratic interests. Now that the forces of narrow cultural nationalism have been put to rout, Beatriz Sarlo rescues Borges from this stalemated debate and repositions him at the crossroads between his country and Europe. Rather than resolving the tensions between these two worlds, she highlights them in a metaphor that will recur in this dissertation also: the "game on the edge of various cultures, which touch on the borders." In

this way, Sarlo says, "a writer emerges who has two sides, who is at once cosmopolitan and national" (4).

The concept of the Spanish-American as opposite to the European world runs not only through the entire Spanish-American culture but through the personal experience of many writers who are or have been expatriates from their native lands. Some of the exiles are, among the men, Puig, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, García Márquez; among the women, Poniatowska, Traba, Allende, Valenzuela and Roffé. Most Spanish-American writers have a strong background in English and/or French which, at least for a while, they were taught to consider "superior" and which they never really abandon. Not an exile but a world traveller, Victoria Ocampo, for instance, started her writing career posturing as a French writer and then translating herself into Spanish. The Chilean poet, Gabriela Mistral, comments deplorably on Victoria's infatuation with the French language, deeming her linguistic experience a "tragedy" because the structure of French has disastrous effects on Spanish syntax. But even Mistral—a "nationalist" by every standard—admits that it was precisely by way of Europe that Ocampo's imagination found a voice of its own. According to her, Ocampo emerged as a writer when she established a relationship with other lives—passionate and turbulent like those of Woolf and Brontë—which functioned as models for her own (Gabriela Piensa En ... 49-56).

To my knowledge, the only study focusing on the dialogue between Woolf and a Spanish-American writer is Bernice L. Hausman's "Words Between Women." With a methodology at times similar to mine, it pairs Virginia Woolf and Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979). Hausman allows the strong emotional affinity between the two women to foreshorten, as it were, the great physical distance that separated them as citizens and products of two distanced countries. I think that from 1934—the year Ocampo was introduced to Woolf by Aldous Huxley at the London opening of the Man Ray photography exhibition—to 1941, the year of Woolf's suicide, Ocampo's relationship with Woolf, much to her regret, was always entirely unilateral, not mutual as Hausman suggests. In spite of the exchange of gifts and Ocampo's visits to Tavistock Square, Argentina was to Woolf a mysterious and remote country, "hundido en el tiempo y el espacio" ["buried in time and space"] (Virginia Woolf en su diario 97). It was a land of savage cattle, fox tails, and gilded butterflies. Still, the study establishes a cross-cultural identification between two women who obviously had much to share. At the personal level, they had both grown up in "Victorian" households with dominant parents;¹ they were childless; they had feminist convictions. At the professional level, they both became essayists, critics and prominent editors, presiding over Hogarth and Sur respectively. Through what Hausman calls "the paradigm of

the mirror," based on the myth of Narcissus and Echo, Hausman delineates the relationship between the two women. The mirror is the surface onto which patriarchal values are projected: "in it 'woman' is 'written,' and to it women must attend in order to reflect adequately what is already there" (206). Hausman argues, like Mistral before her, that Woolf provided Ocampo with a means of shaping a specular version—specular indeed but new. This new version refracted, distorted, re-formed those patriarchal reflections of woman each fought so aggressively to dim in her personal milieux.

Most Spanish-American writers equate the European with the apex of cultural accomplishment. Because they are such avid readers of the European canon, comparisons between the literature of the two worlds are inevitable. But, as Sylvia Molloy says, reading the European canon from the context afforded by marginal Spanish-America alters that canon (Women's Writing 22). No matter how "similar," social realities are never evenly balanced. Apart from the problem of the reference point from which a critic observes, reads, and writes two distinct cultures, there is also what Alice Jardine calls "different temporality" (15) and Ana Pizarro calls "discrepancia" ("Sobre las direcciones" 47). Both theorize that comparativism is irretrievably trapped in the study of phenomena out of synch with themselves. The critic is immersed not only in a different set of cultural spaces

but also in different temporalities. When one of those social spaces is Spanish-American women's literature, then the complexity of the situation is twice compounded. The ethnic, geographic, political, cultural and linguistic scope of the concept Spanish-America is so vast that it cannot be encompassed in a single referent. If the other of those social realities is the work of British-born Virginia Woolf, then the disparity is easily established. Culturally, Spanish-America and England are very different in much more than language. Also, critical theory has not until recently been as widely developed in Spanish-America as it is in England. Whereas the consideration of gender is essential to the study of women's experience, the problem of oppression of Latin American women is overshadowed by countless other areas of oppression wherein culture, class, and race are as much of an issue as gender.²

One of the most serious flaws besetting a comparative "translation" of culture involves the formulation of definitions. In an effort to harmonize, one is tempted to view Ferré's anger, for instance, as the type Woolf warned against because it makes ink overflow and mars art (Sitio 18). But critics often fall into this trap of definitions. Bell Gale Chevigny attempts it when she asserts that women writers in Spanish-America adopt a more binding relation between self and society (151-2). Because of this attribute, she concludes, their writing is largely

political. In other words, in an effort to establish her position as "translator" from one culture to another, Chevigny comes dangerously close to essentializing "woman as concept." In Spanish-America the triad of class, sex, and race constitutes an interlocking and ironbound system of relationships. Considerations of class and race have seriously complicated those of sex and gender. In Spanish-America, just as in any other place where a class system exists, critics should be cautious about conclusions based on sex alone, excluding other axes of domination. A definition of Spanish-American feminism is conceptually hazardous since it must depend on a reduction of differences between a variety of manifestations. That is why I prefer to use the term "feminisms," a neologism that points at a multiplicity of voices rather than at a consensus among feminist groups.

The interpretation of Woolf's scholarship is constantly shifting. To some extent, the shift has been dictated by the changes in critical thought as well as the evolution of cultural narratives. If Bakhtin properly underscored the importance of the position from which a writer writes, he has equally stressed the position from which a reader reads. So the ideological leanings of both writer and reader have a political bearing on the work of art. Those leanings involve not just "personal" attitudes but a diversified range of positionings—cultural and ideological—from which

a text is both written and read. And with time, those contexts change as social thinking and fashion change the reader. There have been aspects of the work of Woolf (or of anyone else), visible now, that could not have been visible years ago. In a narrow sense, they were not there years ago. Asserting the opposite would mean that they were always part of the work of art; identifying them would therefore mean a culmination that precludes further action. So if there is any value in reading texts from various perspectives—New Critical, psychoanalytical, feminist—or in arranging texts within the framework of "periods" or "movements"—"boom," "post-boom"—it is because those characterizations largely determine which aspects of a text will be revealed and which will be concealed. In other words, literary history is critical because it discloses those aspects. Merely by virtue of its vastness, the scholarship on Woolf clearly reveals the variations in the mark of context, in itself a very contemporary concept.

Woolf was the trend-setter for the first wave of contemporary scholarship when she set herself apart from the novelists Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy. In her 1910 essay on modern fiction, she lamented their inability to see the "reality," the inner life, of the legendary Mrs. Brown (Common Reader 153). As novelists, the Edwardians "were interested in something outside" (Collected Essays I 327), hopelessly lost in social detail or objects. She, however,

rejected Edwardian "realism"—"the tiresome getting on from lunch to dinner"—tracing, as she said of Mrs. Dalloway, the patterns of an "ordinary mind on an ordinary day" (Common Reader I 154). So for years, "materialists" and "spiritualistic" novelists—using Woolf's own terms—formed two opposing camps. These camps in turn produced impassioned partisanship. Through the years, there have been other debates, no less heated and personal. E. M. Forster's "invalid lady of Bloomsbury" has now become Jane Marcus' "guerrilla fighter in a Victorian skirt" (Laurence 10). Quentin Bell's naive Aunt Virginia is now de Salvo's abused child, a member of a dysfunctional family in an "unredeemably gloomy" household (Mary Ann Caws 29). Woolf's renowned abandonment of plot and character (the overt) for subjective states of mind (the covert) has also been reconsidered. Harvena Richter's subjective metaphors have been displaced by the very real (Zwerdling) and very exterior (Squier) London of recent critics.

In short, there are readings germane to an alignment of Woolf with almost any position (Bowlby 14). Placed in an international context, she now comfortably engages in a dialogue with Ferré, a writer with an open political agenda, as well as with Campos, one interested in post-modern notions of de-centered writing. Accordingly, Toril Moi has called Woolf a stylist who "undermine[s] the notion of unitary self, the central concept of Western male

humanism" (7). Nowhere are the political implications of Woolf's readings clearer than in the tense debate, started in the mid-eighties, between Quentin Bell in Britain and Jane Marcus in the United States. As Woolf's nephew, biographer and co-holder of her copyrights, Bell was protective of Woolf's position among the socially elite to which she belonged. As academician, editor of three collections of feminist essays and books on Woolf, Marcus was informed by slants both socialist and radically feminist. In those terms, the debate was concluded this past year when Woolf came "out of copyright" and into the "public domain." This event frees British publishers from having to seek permission from those who have held hitherto sole rights to her publications (Rachel Bowlby, 1992, 1).

In an attempt to explain the above-mentioned changes in critical viewpoints, Laurence in The Reading of Silence has attributed the shifts to the veering of "centers," or assumptions, that have structured the criticism of Woolf through the years (10). The point is well taken, but I would take the argument further still. The shifts confirm that any definition of "Woolf's feminism"—or of "Spanish-American feminism"—depends on context and perspective, depends on foregrounding of similarity and difference, depends on a definition. As Georg Gugelberger has proved of "Third World Literature" (a restrictive and pejorative term indeed), those definitions are true and they are not true at

the same time because they have limited application as a descriptive label (507).

Granted that Spanish-American feminists are not in most cases radical, they still emerge as largely iconoclastic. In Spanish-American awareness, there is a movement from the patriarchal frame of mind, in which the female form is a mere projection of the male's, its complementary opposite—Adam's rib, so to speak (Magnarelli 1985)—to later stages, in which feminists "create new spaces of discourse . . . rewrite cultural narratives, and . . . define the terms of a different perspective—a view from 'elsewhere'" (Technologies 25). The intermediate stages between these two extremes are tinged with various degrees of intensity, but in general Spanish-America lacked until very recently a substantial body of work applying feminist perspectives to the field of Spanish-American literature. Foreign (especially Anglo-American) academic experts in the field were mostly responsible for whatever scant work in such an area existed until very recently. The reason for the absence of feminist theoreticians was that the aforementioned oppression of women was superseded by countless other situations of oppression. At the national level, the jobless, the underprivileged, the desaparecidos [the "disappeared"] took precedence over women's rights; at the international level, women's issues were subordinated to the economic and political concerns of each Spanish-American

country with respect to the rest of the world. To make matters even worse in Spanish-America, the influence of Catholicism with its cult of the idealized Virgin Mary complicates the study of gender in ways unparalleled in any other society.³

The scholarship of the last eight years has aggressively turned the limelight on Latin-American women's writing. García Pinto published Intimate Histories (1991) and added a new series of interviews to the ones published by Picon Garfield in 1985. Revista Iberoamericana (1985) and Literature & Ideology (1989) dedicated two full issues to Latin-American feminism and women's writing. Collections like Landscapes of a New Land (1989) and Other Fires (1986) brought previously untranslated works to a growing English-speaking readership. Critical articles incorporating state-of-the-art feminist discourse were collected in Splintering Darkness (1990). Debra Castillo published Talking Back (1992), an ambitious book subtitled "Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism." An editorial collaboration of first-rate scholars has made available a landmark volume called Women's Writing in Latin America (1991). Finally, an approach with a pragmatic viewpoint on culture and feminism has recently been published in a series of case studies, called Women, Culture and Politics in Latin America (1990). This list, by no means comprehensive, is indicative of the proliferation in the field.

My subject will highlight the Woolfian intertext in the work of three Spanish-American writers: Rosario Ferré, Julieta Campos, and Sylvia Molloy. It will, of necessity, invite some comparisons; they are inevitable. It is commonly assumed that Spanish-American female writers seem to have written in isolation until very recently. Unlike their colleagues, the feminist champions of peace and social reform,⁴ writers worked "with less writerly contact and less of an eventual audience than their male counterparts" (Beth Miller 23). Still, there is a rich "intertextuality" of obsessions, even among those whose ideologies are different. Reading them synchronically and with the perspective afforded by feminist theory, I verify a kinship between the argument of Argentine (to name just one representative group) women writers and that of other Spanish-Americans (Ocampo — Araújo; Traba — Poniatowska); as well as between those of Spanish-American writers and Anglo-American scholars concerned with women's issues (Peri Rossi — de Lauretis). I also find remarkable compatibility between Spanish-American writers and European theorists: between Castellanos' philosophical objection to language as male construct and Irigaray's critique of language as an instrument of oppression; between Ferré's last laugh and the sardonic laugh of the Medusa, as Cixous envisioned her, emerging through a snaky mane of hair. Although I am aware of the danger of generalizations such as the above, I think

it is equally debilitating not to generalize about women's experience. In order to control the future, we must understand the past, our collective, historical experience as female subjects. And in order to write women's history, we must generalize from the experience of individual women making statements about all women. Let us remember Virginia Woolf's assertion "that women having found their voices have something to say which is of supreme interest and meaning to women" ("The Feminine Note in Fiction" 16).

In this study, I am interested in an "intertextuality" much less obvious but undebatable. Modern theorists invariably go to great lengths to separate intertextual models from studies of sources or influence. They present the two methods as antipodes of critical discourse, implying a conceptual opposition. Whereas a study of sources or influences, according to Barbara Johnson, involves a "linear" or "developmental" (as well as cumulative and progressive) notion of authorship/authority, the intertextual model postulates an antimimetic contagion of writing that negates the supposition that one text specifically imitates another. As Johnson adds, the intertextual model makes a new cut into the material, "creating new dividing lines not between [various] oeuvres but within each of them" (Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism 264). Such a model makes the boundaries between the cultures fluid and thus mirrors the dynamic and diverse

process in which cultures interact. It also renders obsolete the hierarchical categories of "precursor" and "disciple" texts implied in the model of influence. Such a model has been described by Luis A. Renza as a "tradition-bound system" that, rather than challenging, reinforces traditional values endorsing "a benign, even reverential type of humanism" (186). In its dynamics, the disciple text is endowed with associations of imitation and subservience always derived from the genius of the precursor text (22).

Apart from liberating aesthetic production from the derivative trap of influence, the intertextual model also dodges the problems involved in comparative approaches in another sense. If my study were concerned with issues of influence, Jardine's "lack of temporality" and Pizarro's "discronía" would operate as follows. First, there would be the time of Woolf's life and writing, which overlaps for seven years (1934-1941) Ocampo's own but is, in turn, separated from any one of the other later writers privileged in this study by an average of 40 years. Next, there would be the time of international critical discourse in which French thought is especially prominent. Finally, there would be the time of the Spanish-American, which lags chronologically "behind" any of the others. Intertextuality solves the lack of synchronicity of the events studied by virtue of the fact that it does not recognize the notion of linear time. In other words, a later text would help read

an earlier text and vice-versa because the two are interwoven regardless of temporal precedence.

In The Pleasure of the Text, Roland Barthes liked to "savor the ease which brings the anterior text out of the subsequent one" (36) and nothing prevented Borges, for one, from proving that the reverse is also possible; i.e., to savor the ease which brings the subsequent text out of the anterior one. His "Kafka and his Precursors" illustrates precisely the way in which intertextuality works regardless of authorial intention. In this parable, Borges found Kafkaesque qualities in the work of predecessors Zeno, Han Yu, Kierkegaard, Browning, León Bloy, and Lord Dunsany after he read Kafka. "The fact is," Borges wrote, "that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future. In this correlation "the identity or plurality of the men involved is unimportant" (Labyrinths 201).

It is not coincidental that both Roland Barthes and Jorge L. Borges are quoted in this context. Their names are associated with the theory and practice of a postmodern methodology. The "death of the author" that Barthes heralded was accompanied by the "birth of the text" and a host of other intriguing novelties—the dearth of origin, meaning, and referentiality. So together with factors of influence and authorship, one may weave a postmodern method, establishing a liberating relationship between "influence"

and artistic production. That relationship is possible through the intertextual model.

Mikhail Bakhtin develops the idea of "intertextuality" in his theory of dialogism or "double-voiced discourse." In Chapter IV of The Dialogic Imagination, Bakhtin discusses the "importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness." He also says that "One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another and dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse" (248). The process of liberation is hastened by the constant competition of a variety of alien voices within any individual consciousness, any individual text. Powerfully borrowing from Bakhtin to authorize her own voice, Julia Kristeva in 1966 conceived of "intertextuality" as a "mixture of textual signs, citations and echoes." Informed by Derrida and Lacan, she transposed Bakhtin's emphasis on the word to a focus on texts, so that the literary word is conceived as a locus of "textual surfaces rather than a point [of fixed meaning], as a dialogue among several writings." Kristeva thus concludes: "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of citations, every text is an absorption and transformation of another text" (Desire in Language 66). Bakhtin's dialogized word is literally incorporated in Kristeva's intertext. So in a

"self-authorizing strategy," one [Kristeva] uses often, she extricates her own voice from that of her male precursor. This "misreading," Susan Stanton Friedman maintains (in turn borrowing from Harold Bloom, a male precursor theorist of influence), "does not eliminate the other, but rather borrows his authority from the position of disciple. Intertextuality was paradoxically born under the guise of influence" (147).

The negotiation Kristeva established with Bakhtin—intertextual in itself—sheds some light on the function of agency implicit in the model. Feminist critics Nancy Miller and Susan Stanton Friedman have resisted the presupposition condition that intertextuality inevitably requires the death of the author. Miller devised the concept of "arachnology." In it she welds Barthesian notions of the text as "web"—that seemingly spins itself—with an insistence on the importance of the spider as subject, author, agent, gendered body and producer of texts. Arachnology, Nancy Miller concedes, allows "a critical positioning which reads against the weave of undifferentiation to discover the embodiment in writing of a gendered subjectivity" (272). On the other hand, Friedman uses Kristeva's example to demonstrate that intertextuality does not necessarily require the death of the author. After coining the term as a sequence from Bakhtin, Kristeva criticized readers for distorting the meaning she intended.

Friedman points out that the idea of intention contradicts anonymous intertextuality. Although she notes the irony, Friedman does not fault Kristeva; she simply demonstrates that "the discourses of influence and intertextuality have not been and cannot be kept pure, untainted by each other" (154). Unavoidably, intertextuality originates in the discourse of influence. The author—once dismissed—is reinserted in the fabric of the text, most conspicuously, by American theoreticians.

The process of authorizing oneself through somebody else's voice is used frequently: Kristeva from Bakhtin, Ocampo from very many masters of the European canon. It was Gabriela Mistral who expressed with an opportune "textile" metaphor the process through which Ocampo wove her own voice through the fabric of Brontë's biography at the same time that she disentangled herself from the knots and the slubs that tied her to her masters (53), especially Brontë and Woolf. All these examples confirm that everyone with designs of becoming a writer is first and foremost a reader. Somewhat beyond the strict sense of the term "intertextuality" as developed by Bakhtin or Kristeva is Michael Worton's and Judith Still's broader usage of the term. They expand the theory that texts do not function as hermetic and self-sufficient wholes but as permeable systems open to the infiltration of references, quotations and influences. They explicitly posit the creative writer as "a

reader of texts" before (s)he is "a creator of texts" (1). On the other hand, the process of reading invariably converts the reader into an agent of intertextuality because of all the texts (s)he brings to the moment of reading. So crucial is a reader's function that if a certain allusion is unknown to him/her, it will go unnoticed and lie dormant. Conversely, the newness of a reader's experience may lend new and fresh interpretations to the old allusion.

That is why as bi-lingual or tri-lingual or transcultural writers, Rosario Ferré, Julieta Campos, and Sylvia Molloy were ipso facto readers of the British tradition, wherein they found Woolf, a champion of women's rights; they responded instantly to her influential voice. As Bell Gale Chevigny states, "the importance of Woolf's theory to Latin American women writers cannot be overstated" (155).⁵ Furthermore, Worton and Still are helpful in arguing that both axes of intertextuality—texts intervening via authors (who are, first, readers) then texts intervening via readers (who are, also, co-producers) are politically charged. In other words, the interaction between texts is never neutral. This fact is confirmed by the testimonies of numerous Spanish-American writers whose encounters with Woolf are invariably personal—never cool—and intensely passionate. Among Woolf's most frequently adopted metaphors are the writer's room of her own (Kamenszain, 1983; Pampillo, 1989; Ordóñez, 1991), the related metaphor of the

closed door that deconstructs the dichotomies inside/outside because it liberates while it locks in (Ordóñez, 1993; Ferré, 1991) and, finally, the metaphor of textuality that figures fiction as "a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners" (A Room of One's Own 43). Engaging in "the practice of self-consciousness" that de Lauretis has identified, each of these women tries to relate understanding of her personal condition as a woman, in terms social and political, to other women's understanding of their respective sociosexual positions. The adjective "personal" is crucial to the practice of self-consciousness. In fact, that practice is now evolving globally partly because the premise underlying it is that women share in the experience of collective oppression.

I can offer no fully satisfactory rationale for privileging Ferré, Campos, and Molloy over other numerous writers like the ones Chevigny in a footnote rightly identified as touched by Woolf's mark. But lifetime exposure to Woolf's aesthetics; evident close knowledge of her work; similarities of technique and subject; a feminist persuasion—those characteristics certainly invite a comparison. A justification of my choice must also lie in a less frivolous reason than my own unswerving interest in those three writers. To the possible objections reasonably raised I answer rather unreasonably that the choice is to

some extent arbitrary. Still, some justification lies in the fruitfulness of the enterprise itself. In choosing a mode of reading one should ask what useful political questions it answers. The intertextual model places this dissertation within the agenda foreseen by some women scholars today. Friedman and Fuchs, for instance, in their recent work, Breaking the Sequence, urge "studies substantiating the continuation of [the] link between Woolf and Richardson and second and third-generation experimentalists" (41). Similarly, Ann Rosalind Jones, in relating Anglo-American to French feminism, addresses the urgency of feminist investigations of textual politics in more than one or two languages (108).

Notes

1. In Jane Greenberg's "A Question of Blood" the adjective "Victorian" describes the "rigid . . . codes of behavior" Ocampo faced while she was coming of age in turn-of-the-century Argentina (Women and Culture 135).
2. I follow de Lauretis' useful distinctions in Alice Doesn't when she first said, "By 'woman' I mean a fictional construct, a distillate from diverse but congruent discourses dominant in Western cultures" and later "by 'women,' on the other hand, I (will) mean the real historical beings" (5).
3. The extent to which the figure of the Virgin, especially the Madonna, has framed a gendered sense of self for Spanish-American women has always been vaguely intuited. But it is only in the last year, after the insistent cry for "social specificity" (Spivak) has been heeded, that studies have paused to assess the impact of culture-specific images, both positive and negative. It is only lately that lack of unity or the presence of differences among cultures has been recognized as enabling rather than debilitating. A recent study identifies La Virgen de Guadalupe, Catholic patroness of México, as the "good" model of mothering. Her salient attributes, derived from Mary herself, are holiness and self-abnegation. La Llorona, on the other hand, is the "deviant" image, the example not to be emulated. She is a mother who committed suicide after slaughtering her own children. As a result, she is condemned to weeping her way into eternity to atone for the children she sacrificed. Both images color the ethnic/maternal in Chicano and Mexican communities in very particular ways (Segura & Pierce 76).
4. Francesca Miller, in her research into the historical roles of women from the 1880s to the 1940s reveals feminist networking "across national frontiers . . . a Pan-American context in which women could confront global problems despite their disenfranchisement at home" (6). Notably, the study discloses historiographic assumptions that imply that feminist thought in Latin America is derivative and not sui generis. Yet the extensive historical record she digs out belies these assumptions (10-26).

5. With unrestrained admiration, Victoria Ocampo, for instance, called Woolf "the most precious thing in London" (Virginia Woolf en su diario 94).

CHAPTER TWO

STRATEGIC BROWSING: ROSARIO FERRÉ VISITS VIRGINIA WOOLF'S MANIFESTOES

Yo no quiero que a mi niña
la vayan a hacer princesa.
Con zapatillas de oro,
¿cómo juega en las praderas?
Y cuando llegue la noche
a mi lado no se acuesta . . .

"Miedo", Gabriela Mistral.

In the specific case of some Puerto Rican writers, the duality dominant versus dominated needs to be reformulated. In this instance, the poles of the duality—not dictated by individual taste and/or circumstance but by national politics and geographic proximity—are not Europe versus Spanish-America, but North America versus Puerto Rico. In order to discuss Rosario Ferré's position as a writer, it is important to understand the history of her country because her work takes issue with its politics. The island, once inhabited by the peaceful Arawak Indians, went into Spanish hands in 1493 when Columbus claimed it for the Spanish crown. Coveted for its agricultural and strategic potential, it was ceded by Spain to the United States in 1898 at the end of what Theodore Roosevelt called "that splendid little war," the Spanish-American War. Many Puerto

Ricans today feel that their country's liberty from Spain was imminent at the time that the United States intervened. During the nineteenth century, liberal forces campaigned to achieve two major accomplishments: the abolition of slavery and the institution of an autonomous island government. But the second of these reforms was swept away when, through a series of legislative acts, the United States established military control, and Puerto Rico was subject to the United States Congress. The first of these, the Foraker Act (1900), replaced the interim military government with a civil administration under a presidentially appointed government and designated English as the island's official language. This act remained in effect until 1917, when the Jones Act made the island United States territory and granted Puerto Ricans American citizenship. However, they were not allowed to elect their own governor until 1948; they could not write their own constitution until 1952. In 1992, the legislature of Puerto Rico—after caustic debate—passed a bill, changing the official status of the two languages. The "Spanish-only" law of 1990, designating Spanish as Puerto Rico's only official language, was amended and the "English-also" bill, making both languages official, was approved.

Clearly, opinions are divided about the role the United States should play in island life. History shows that United States intervention in the island is received with

mixed feelings. For example, one of the early initiatives intended to boost the debilitated island economy was Operation Bootstrap, inaugurated by F. D. Roosevelt in the 1940s. It guaranteed investors tax benefits and helped them to clear agricultural land and to develop businesses. The supporters of Operation Bootstrap naturally point at the benefits accrued by the plan; on the other hand, its detractors stress the interference that such controlled economic programs impose on the local government, in short, on those who favor the promise of employment or economic support. Those who favor statehood see the island as unable to survive without the United States' promise of employment or economic support. Those who favor autonomy, on the other hand, see their culture and tradition inexorably stifled by American materialism (American Mosaic 244-48). Today the island is a "free state associated" with the United States. This status is likely to continue as the polls last year revealed a political deadlock of sorts, a country nearly evenly divided into halves which favor either statehood or independence. These two factions are mirrored in the dual self-image shared by the forty percent of Puerto Ricans who live today on the mainland. They see their communities either as culturally autonomous or as economically dependent (31).

Juan Flores distinguishes three waves of immigration from the island to the continent. The first consisted of

Puerto Rican exiles, who fled into New York in the late decades of the nineteenth century as survivors of the war of independence from Spain, thereby escaping the clutches of colonial rule. The second surge of immigration started during the first half of the twentieth century—namely between 1917, when the Jones Act decreed collective citizenship, and the mass immigration of 1945. During those years, the plantation system collapsed and many of the country workers—campesinos or jiberos—were displaced from the countryside, looking for the scarce new jobs in the urban areas where industry was booming. Finally, in the years following World War II (1945-1965), when the postwar economic boom created a demand for labor, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans moved to the continental United States in search of improved economic conditions (144-147). They often settled in the ghettos of New York and other eastern cities, where they confronted linguistic, ethnic, and racial barriers. A major theme that recurs as an issue in one guise or another among writers on the mainland or on the island, is the question of Puerto Rican identity. For all factions identity is a complex negotiation between two worlds many times at war with one another.

Rosario Ferré, a native of Ponce, sees the Spanish heritage of her country as irretrievably lost. In the history of any country divided about its destiny, "culture" acquires a distinct meaning. As Terry Eagleton says,

imperialism is more than cheap labor power, raw materials, and accessible markets. It is the violent uprooting of language and custom, the imposition of alien ways of experiencing the world (215). For example, the above-mentioned Operation Bootstrap caused the old feudal sugarcane aristocracy, which had reigned socially supreme, to be replaced by a new breed of industrialists whose values were materialistic and imported from the northern United States.

Ferré was born of a marriage between "old" and "new" money, of an aristocratic sugar plantation owner and of Luis A. Ferré, former governor of Puerto Rico (1969-1973). She witnessed the drama of her native island played out in her own parental background. She often uses biographical material in her writing. In "Las Dos Venecias," she recounts her weekly childhood trips with her mother from the industrial town of Ponce de León to the coastal Mayagüez, domicile of her maternal sugar-cane-growing ancestors (7-14). The trip, she says, worked as a painful reminder to her mother of the ancestral exile she had chosen and the "paradise" she had given up in order to marry. Ferré admits that her mother's life was happy; her husband was a successful engineer, educated at M.I.T., a man with a long political career and aspirations he amply fulfilled. Her own fulfillment as wife and mother, however, never seemed fair exchange for the paradise she had given up. Juxtaposed

with Ferré's rendition of Puerto Rican history in the preface to Maldito Amor—of the collapse of the national sugar-cane-based economy—the negotiations with destiny that both her mother and the country transacted are quite similar. It is as if the two dramas paralleled one another.

Ferré was educated in the traditional conventions of island society (Franco X). Thus, she married early and had three children, but she was divorced soon after. It was not until relatively late in life that she graduated from college, first in New York majoring in English and French literature and then in San Juan majoring in Spanish and Latin American literature (García Pinto 87-88). She began her own literary career in the early 1970s as editor of the magazine Zona de Carga y Descarga. As an intellectual and a guardian of native "roots," her political stance is diametrically opposed to that of her father, who fought long for Puerto Rico's full integration with the United States as a state. She, on the other hand, sees few effects of United States' intervention in Puerto Rico that are not negative.

Her position in the present debate among Puerto Rican intellectuals can be deduced from her decision to return to her native country and thus end a productive five-year stay in Washington, where she completed a doctorate in Spanish. In the latest of Ferré's autobiographical essays, "On Destiny, Language, and Translation; or, Ophelia Adrift in the C. & O. Canal"—a mixture of testimonial and criticism—

her most eloquent statement is not the rationale behind her decision to return, but the decision itself. She admits that in the past, she would have returned for the same reason that war correspondents choose to write about war conflicts from the trenches and not from "the pleasant hillocks that overlook the battlefields" (154). But, in the present she sees herself spanning, as a Spanish-American writer, a channel that does not quite divide two shores but that bridges them. This imagery is inspired by a dream she had shortly before she made the decision to return to the island for good. In this dream, she was crossing the C. & O. Canal, when she was suddenly swept by a current, at the same time that a strong voice warned her that all "the precautions of language had to be taken, as the locks were soon to be opened and the water level was going to rise" (153). The current was so strong that it was impossible for her to reach either of the ever-receding shores. So, floating supine, like Ophelia, she finally stopped resisting the drift. She interprets this dream as an allegory for her position as writer. As such, she inhabits neither of the shores on either side of the current but rather the middle space, the gulf, contained by two shores through which the water glides. This way she de-constructs the heavy oppositions Washington/San Juan; north/south, English/Spanish; mainland/island, into differences that can turn into one another. She says,

Being a writer . . . one has to learn to live by letting go, by renouncing the reaching of this or that shore, but to let oneself become the meeting place of both (155).

This Heraclitean metaphor is fitting; water bathes both shores, provides havens on both banks, and allows navigation. Its constant flow emphasizes process. Through this metaphor Ferré claims to possess as a writer the capacity to fluctuate and adapt that Mignolo deems essential to the Latin American critic ("Fronteras Culturales." 103-112). Ferré is both writer and critic.

From my point of view, it seems that United States cultural colonialism was also partly accountable for the victimization of Puerto Rican women because, as Jean Franco argues, "the fate of the women is intimately tied to that of Puerto Rico" (XIII). Ferré's mother is an example of this victimization and so is she, as the allegory of the flowing river shows. Though the forces of exploitation are largely external to the family (industrialization, for instance), in the female experience they remain internal in and endemic to the patriarchal family whose existence is founded on rigid gender roles and the erasure of selfhood of women in order to serve fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. In a society in transition, insecure about its cultural identity, Ferré casts her eye upon those female types "objectified" by their condition. Chronologically, "The Youngest Doll" is the first short-story Ferré ever wrote. She published it in the magazine Zona de Carga y Descarga in the early 1970s.

In it she introduces one of her staple metaphors for the condition of objectification in which she finds women: the (bridal) doll—fair, frozen, and frigid. This condition is inherent in the members of the moneyed class she comes from, and she has since the early seventies relentlessly critiqued. The story is set against the background of the socio-economic revolution which marked the slow death of an agrarian-based society and the emergence of some industrialization. The characters representative of the old aristocracy are a rural family consisting primarily of nine marriageable girls and a spinster aunt who spends her spare time perfecting the art of making dolls that resemble her beautiful nieces. The representative of the new urban class is a monomaniacal male doctor who victimizes the aunt throughout her lifetime by failing to operate on her leg for a rare condition that developed in her youth. Deliberately neglecting to cure her, the doctor treats her interminably and thus guarantees himself a fortune that will put his ambitious son through medical school in the United States, and also eventually make the latter socially eligible to marry the youngest belle of that languishing, but nevertheless aristocratic, family.

So, like aunt like niece; the resignation with which the older woman literally loses control over her disfigured, aging body is paralleled in the second generation by the passivity with which the youngest niece surrenders to her

doctor husband. The former is paralyzed by a grotesque, protruding, festering, oozing leg which harbors an "angry river prawn" and strips her of all vanity. The latter—a fetishized classic beauty with magnolia skin, paralyzed by encumbrances of muslin and lace like the bridal doll—has the static body of an icon. While the aunt possesses the taboo body that repels the gaze, the niece possesses the idealized beauty that impels the entire village into compulsive voyeurism. As the years go by, both become selfless prisoners of their mercenary medical practitioners—all the more "feminine" for their mute subservience.

Finally, the lid to this textual Pandora's box is opened and the unexpected revealed. The living doll, always on display in a hot cubicle of balcony, bears a disquieting resemblance to the honey-stuffed one on the piano—with half-closed eyes and an icy mien. One night, when the husband finds his young woman-doll asleep, her quietness is so noticeable that he auscultates her to verify she is alive. To his horror, he hears not a heartbeat but the swish of river waters. And suddenly her eye-sockets burst, and "the frenzied antennae of . . . prawns" poke out. Through the fantastic, the disintegration of the doll—traditional symbol of the "feminine"—becomes the liberating sign.¹

The subjugation of Puerto Rican women is ubiquitous, not just cross-generational but inter-racial. Comparing the

treatment of female characters in Ferré's "When Women Love Men" and—a compatriot of hers,—Luis Rafael Sánchez's in his La Guaracha del Macho Camacho (1976) reveals that while the former fuses them in a play of doubles, the latter rigidly polarizes them. Ferré's implication is that all women—black and white, rich and poor, "beautiful" and "ugly"—bear equally the oppression of the system (Fernández Olmos 43).

Because Ferré's perspective is always woman-centered, she served her apprenticeship in writing by reading extensively the French and English women novelists. It is not surprising that Virginia Woolf—the woman writer par excellence and a textual model for women's writing in general (Bowlby 12)—engrossed her. Between the two, there is one irrefutable—linear, one-way—conjuncture: Ferré confesses that she went "literally crazy" when she first discovered Woolf (García Pinto 98) and read everything the British writer ever wrote ("La Cocina" 140). Ferré shares with Woolf what Gilbert and Gubar diagnose in the latter as "female, schizophrenia of authorship" (Madwoman 78), a split that allows women writers a reconciliation of opposing forces within themselves. She certainly agrees with Showalter's argument that for her, as for most mid-twentieth-century novelists (in more than the English tradition, I would add), Woolf is the intimidating angel in the house of feminist fiction (265). In the first part of

"The Writer's Kitchen," Ferré conjoins Woolf with Beauvoir as her "evangelistas de cabecera" (16). Reasonably translated to the English "mentors," the noun carries in the original religious associations lost in translation (216). The evangelists not only penned the four Gospels, but they were also scribes for those who could not write. Like an "angel," an "evangelist" is worthy of veneration by virtue of his/her holiness.

So undivided is Ferré's attention to Woolf's coaching, that even when the former disagrees with the advice of the latter, such advice is never ignored. One such occasion relates to Woolf's admonition to women writers to strive for objectivity and distance. At that time she specifically separated two women from the gallery of writers who made an emotional nuisance of themselves. According to Woolf, only Austen and Brontë succeeded in writing like Shakespeare, "with a mind incandescent and unimpeded" (216).

However, Ferré is repeatedly disturbed by Woolf's claim that passion and anger are serious deterrents to true artistic production ("Autenticidad" 39). Woolf strongly warned women writers against voicing anger in their fiction, for she saw anger as a restriction of intellectual and aesthetic freedom. According to her, great works of art do not come from bitterness and resentment. Both men and women must overcome anger before the true liberated act of creation can take place. As stated in A Room of One's Own,

the task for the woman who could write well was to write "without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protesting, without preaching" (71). In an essay added to the second edition of Sitio a Eros (1980), Ferré discusses the positive way in which she controlled her anger, as if she had finally come to terms with Woolf's renowned rejection of that emotion. Ferré establishes a relationship between two apparently dissimilar projects: Papeles de Pandora and Fables of the Bleeding Heron, texts she published within six years of one another. She considers the former a didactic book, devoid of scholastic purposefulness, intended to aid young adult girls her own daughter's age while the latter is allegoric and innovative. However, Ferré concedes that the aim of the two projects was the same. Both show how women (as historical subjects in one case and mythic subjects in the other) are irreconcilably trapped by two types of commitments—social and personal. It is within the continuum afforded by the two projects that Ferré sees an attenuation of her anger (designated in the original with the Spanish noun "ira;" English "ire") through the formal use of irony as a technique that allows her a more effective distance between herself and her topic ("Sobre cómo atemperar el acero del discurso" 196-8). Ferré thus works out her major discrepancy of opinion with a writer she reveres. Most

notably, in the process of so doing, she equates Woolf's strategy with her own. She explains,

The fact that Virginia Woolf spoke so energetically against anger in A Room of One's Own is ironically proof of the importance of suppressed anger in her own novels. A Room of One's Own is an essay built on anger, although on a special type of anger: that which has been refined in the crucible of irony. ("How I wrote 'When Women Love Men'" 148)

Although Woolf's dicta resonate at the core of Ferré's discussions, her personal ambivalence as to Woolf's art is evident throughout. Often Ferré's reverential admiration of Woolf co-exists with anxious criticisms of Woolf's perspectives, as is clear in the following passage, in which her infatuation with Woolf's example helps her arrive at a general truth about the perils of influence:

When one tries to write a story (or a poem or a novel), stopping to listen to advice, even from those whom one most admires, almost always has negative consequences. (219)

The currency of Woolf's work is especially meaningful to Ferré and others because her work stands for what Amy Kaminsky calls a "testimony to survival" (Reading the Body Politic 19). No one can disregard Woolf's doomed personal life: her bouts of mental illness; her tragedies—the early death of her mother, brother, half-sister; her father's melancholia. Now, Woolf's how-to-write-well directives to women are continuously being glossed, her testimony personalized to suit different realities. Both as

"inheritor" and "originator" of a female tradition, the woman of color, the woman of lesser means, the woman with children have all relativized Woolf's coaching. Gloria Anzaldúa has updated Woolf for the Third World by proletarianizing her famous pronouncement. She re-writes Woolf for the Latina in a manner that foregrounds the external, material obstacles to be overcome while the battle for economic survival robs her of time and leisure to write. In other words, she should draw power from the very conditions that excluded her from writing:

Forget the room of one's own—write in the kitchen, lock yourself up in the bathroom. Write on the bus or the welfare line, on the job or during meals, between sleeping or waking. I write sitting on the john. No long stretches at the typewriter unless you're wealthy or have a patron. You may not even own a typewriter. While you wash the floor or clothes listen to words chanting in your body. When you're depressed, angry, hurt, when compassion and love passes you. When you cannot help but write. (170)

Also, Alice Walker has convincingly argued that the ideal of the childless artist—of which Woolf is the avatar—is pernicious. The belief that children or, more exactly, the care they require by some strange logic warp one's genius has been debilitating to many aspiring writers ("A Child of One's Own").

Even with reservations (sometimes serious ones) Woolf's work is scrutinized for techniques that attest to her textual survival. She pioneered in narrative strategies

that challenged the master quest plot—the romance story. By now critics have devised a number of metaphors of great academic currency possibly related to what Jane Marcus called the notable disruption of the language of patriarchy that evoke Woolf's achievement of writing other-wise. Molly Hite credits Woolf with broaching "the other side of the story;" Friedman and Fuchs with "breaking the sequence" to rupture traditional forms and creating a space for linguistic fantasies with the capacity to harbor the feminine. Finally, Rachel Blau du Plessis convincingly argued that Woolf inaugurated "writing beyond the ending." Among other things, she subverted plot linearity (a story's purposeful forward movement), the single, authoritative story-teller; well delineated characters interacting in social patterns, and movement towards a closure. In short, she created a new fictional space in which the marginal—the feminine—could be inscribed. Such an act was political, its design a critique of patriarchal culture.

But a simple comparison of Woolf and Ferré would only be problematic. Their voices do not commingle as smoothly as Ocampo's do with Woolf's in "Virginia Woolf in my Memory," the last emotional tribute Ocampo paid to the writer that dark April of 1941, when Woolf took her own life (Meyer 235-240). Yet Ferré shares with the British feminist the conviction that society is overwhelmingly patriarchal. In Ferré's stories women are subjected to unscrupulous male

doctors ("The Youngest Doll"); lecherous male servants ("From Here to Paradise"); adulterous male chauvinists and infantile egocentrics ("Mercedes Benz 220 LS"). Both also make a connection between war and dress. In the following passage from Three Guineas, Mary Daly sees Woolf discovering the deceptive "sacredness" of a male-centered myth (Gyn/Ecology 45). After addressing the flamboyance of the clothes worn by educated men in their public capacities (19), Woolf asks:

'What connection is there between the sartorial splendors of the educated man and the photograph of ruined houses and dead bodies? Obviously the connection between dress and war is not far to seek; your finest clothes are those that you wear as soldiers.' (21)

Similarly, comparing a male-centered myth with the military parade, Ferré, in the short-story "Amalia," links the sterile showiness of gold-braided military attire and the havoc of war with sexual oppression in a sexually polarized society that divides the female (private) from the male (public) domain. "Amalia" is the story of an orphan under the pedophilic guardian-ship of an uncle who has an impressive military career with decorations, medals, wears a general's eagle, and enjoys the company of ambassadors. The nameless protagonist is secluded in the house; she is not even allowed out in the garden. Therefore, she is limited to witnessing the endless procession of ministers and generals who frequent the house and to playing with her favorite doll, Amalia. It is onto Amalia that she unloads

the anxieties of her existence. She dresses her in black when her own mother passes away; in white, when she herself takes communion. Furthermore, she is painfully aware of the "difference" between Amalia and other dolls. Amalia is, from her viewpoint, a romantic anachronism:

You didn't know . . . that you were doomed to failure from the start because you belonged to another world and to another age, that your fine wax body had absolutely no practical use, that the delicate music box in your chest would soon become rusted and would one day burst in a tiny firework of chimes. (Papeles 56)

The doll, as the objectivized representation of the girl herself, is incinerated in the end. Her wax body melts especially fast, under a sky "dripping cyanide and nitroglycerine" (77) (translation is mine since this detail is unluckily lost in the English version). The girl's demise symbolized by the doll's destruction is easily foreshadowed in a passage in which Ferré, like Woolf, envisions a procession of ambassadors, colonels, generals (a prophetic echo of liturgical voices adds the ecclesiastical powers to the list and leaves no doubt of the "sanctimony" of these marchers), bringing destruction to the world. Uncomprehending, the girl listens to the men make war in still another military maneuver as the text explodes in a bilingual word vertigo, lost in the English version and carnivalesque in its deliberate double-voice. Bilingualism is a site of resistance at once in language and across languages, nations, histories, and sexes. Literally at

war(!) are Spanish and English, Puerto Rico and the United States, colonized and colonizer, woman and man:

. . . we are shipping M-48 tanks, landing tanks, every fifteen minutes, landing tanks, using nine triple turret 8-inch guns, largest in service, destroying guided missiles, helicopters at its shores, every fifteen minutes, fresh fighter bombers, F4 phantoms, AG intruders, A7 corsairs, every fifteen minutes, opening their jaws to vomit death titititititi.

la máquina de teletipo sigue tititititi sacándome la lengua, ensedándola alrededor de las patas de las sillas del comedor y de los tiradores de las gavetas civilians glee as gunners slammed barrage after barage tititititi llenando el comedor hasta el tedro de serpentina blanca. (Papeles 71)

To the constraints of patriarchal society Woolf adds the inhibitions a woman has to break through to be free to write. Ferré's "Woman's Authenticity in Art," uses A Room of One's Own to focus on the intimately-related literary and social problems concerning women. Both texts yield a double-textured analysis in which two sets of problems, the literary and the social (or should it be the social and the literary), remaining unclearly demarcated, beset both the Spanish-American writer of the eighties and the British writer of the thirties. Among Woolf's pronouncements elsewhere, the first to emerge intertextually is that in order to write a woman needs to have "the courage to surmount opposition and the determination to be true to herself" ("Women and Fiction" 48); the second is that she must aggressively tell "the truth [emphasis added] about her own experiences as a female body" ("Professions" 62).

Ferré's counterpart to Woolf's "truth" is "authenticity" (37). Woolf's positioning of the female body at the center of textuality, makes her writing practices forerunners by sixty years of l'écriture féminine. Jinny in The Waves declares: "My imagination is my body" (149); Jane Marcus identifies "I tried a sentence or two in my tongue" as a good example of Cixous' "writing with the body" (Sapphisty 168). Woolf proposed that the woman writer register her experience uncensored by either external or internal factors. In turn, Ferré speaks of the woman writer's need to learn the most intimate secrets of her body, to speak without euphemisms, and to examine her own capacity for eroticism (37). She actualizes Woolf's advice through her de-legitimization of narrative patterns which embody social practices that repress women. Like Woolf, she knows that family and culture are contaminated—indeed constructed—by male biases and assumptions. Because patriarchal pressure has banned certain topics—homosexuality, incest, parricide, prostitution, auto-eroticism—from a woman's agenda, Ferré embraces them, "hesitating at no subject" (A Room of One's Own 113). In her collection entitled Papeles de Pandora (1976), Ferré reclaims for woman "her goods, her pleasures, her organs" (Cixous 250) that are traditionally bound by the shackles of church, family, and myth.

In order to de-legitimize, Ferré defies social scripts by transgressing against their laws. She shares with Cixous a conviction that the imagination is subversive ("Writer's Kitchen" 224), so she writes in order to transform the system, "slaying" the power of myth as forcefully as Woolf strove to "kill" that icon of Victorian ideology, the Angel of the House—the angel of self-abnegation—in order to write freely. Most of Ferré's stories repudiate the mystification of fairy-tales so that, unlike fairy tales, they end in female disenchantment. "The Poisoned Story" is a fiction sustaining the argument critically proven by Carolyn Heilbrun in Writing a Woman's Life that women internalize the stories told about them (1988). Heilbrun maintains that "lives do not serve as models; only stories do that" because "we can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts" (37). This thesis she has convincingly expanded in her Hamlet's Mother and Other Women (1990). She identifies those texts as scripts read, chanted, experienced electronically, and whispered by mothers, all telling women what conventions demand.

As an example of both female disenchantment and of the power of fairy tales, "The Poisoned Story" pits Don Lorenzo—an impoverished, widowed sugarcane-plantation owner—and his bookworm daughter against a social-climbing seamstress with delusions of grandeur and a petty hatred of

books. When widower and seamstress marry, Rosaura, the daughter, becomes the easy prey of Rosa (the wicked step-mother) who constantly ridicules her reading. This conflict activates the classical city/country opposition, wherein the latter element is heavily valorized. Although Don Lorenzo's "dreams of glory" stand at an unromantic standstill and his economic hardships eventually force him to sell his property and move, he retains a strong sense of identity through reverence for his homeland. His nostalgia for a lost paradise is revealed in his literary pursuits (he is presently writing a book about the incidents of 1898), in his delight in creole cooking and in his treasured knickknacks which are mementoes of better days. Furthermore, this family triangle plays off the opposition between art-lovers and art-haters who dismiss writing and reading as mere wool-gathering and do-nothing. Accordingly, Rosa complains about having to skin her fingers sewing while Rosaura reads. In an alignment of land/culture/property/tradition, Rosa dismisses Don Lorenzo as one of "the romantic and the rich" who—with other "ruined landowners," "frustrated, small-town writers," and "bitter politicians" still resent Puerto-Rican dependency (13).

But the victimized prevails in this tale. True, Don Lorenzo dies after witnessing his wife become quite a successful designer. She copies Hollywood gowns and caters to the whims of ladies who are wild about the latest fashion

trends imported from the north ("they have to follow it;" "they have to have it"). But it is Rosaura—or rather, literature through Rosaura—that does away with Rosa. One day, while browsing through the illustrations in a storybook, the step-mother is compellingly attracted to the first line because the tale's heroine has the same name as her step-daughter. She goes on reading, but never reaches the end; half-way through the tale she drops dead mysteriously.

Jean Franco has already cleverly interpreted this tale. In the preface of the English translation of Ferré's Papeles de Pandora, The Youngest Doll, she says that this story "reveals the double meaning of plotting itself" (XII). With her interpretation of its theme, Franco absorbs this tale into the sustained metaphor of her latest critical book. In Plotting Women (1991), she plays on the two parallel meanings of the verb "to plot." First, women endeavor to write their own "plots," inscribing the female experience into patriarchal discourse and, second, they are constantly "plotting," in the sense of conspiring against, the traditional authoritarianism of the intelligentsia (specifically México's) which is represented predominantly by the monological discourse of church and nation. Ferré's story parallels the fairy-tale motif of the wicked step-mother who abuses her step-daughter but then becomes one of a struggle to redress the injustices committed against the

old aristocracy by the entrepreneur Rosa. In other words, the tale stands as metonymy for the social milieu of the story as a whole. In one sense, I suggest, this text updates the Arabian Nights' motif of justice rendered in "The Vizier That Was Punished". In that story a tyrant king unjustly condemns his physician, Dounban, to death. A man of professed respect for books, Dounban leaves the king specific instructions on how to use a book to answer any questions he might need answered after the physician's death. Intrigued, the king closely follows directions: to open the book at the sixth page; to read the third line of the left page; to deposit the physician's cut-off head on top of it; and to interrogate it. The king, like Rosa, has difficulty turning the pages since both books have pages which stick together annoyingly. As a result, both readers need to thumb them with moistened finger. Although it is unclear how the poison on the page works, in both stories the readers succumb to its lethal effect.

"Sleeping Beauty" is a story ending in both female disenchantment and transgression against social structures repressive of women. In "Woman's Authenticity in Art," Ferré places on the agenda of women writers the task of convincing their readers that Prince Charming "does not exist, has no materiality outside the imagination" (38). Ferré is convinced that the female audience has been painfully misled by what they have read. Accordingly, in

"Sleeping Beauty" the handsome "prince" first awakens a sleeping princess, but soon the prince and his cohorts insidiously put her into a sleep-like wakefulness which ends with her death. The central, quasi-muted character is María, a conventionally reared, upper-middle-class icon whose fondest desire is to be a dancer. She is first policed by father then by husband both representing the law, the Name-of-the-Father. Through clever manipulation, they trap her into what she thinks will be a liberating (but turns out to be a deadly) marriage. The conspiracy is implied in a collage of epistolary social scripts such as correspondence (mostly between María's father and the Mother Superior of the Catholic school which she attended and which her father supports with impressive contributions); wedding invitations; birth and baptism announcements; journalistic commentary on the "cosmetologized" society of Puerto Rico; the libretti/reviews of Giselle and Sleeping Beauty. A few, unpunctuated, stream-of-consciousness passages are included because María is a muted character coded "outside" the text in the gaze of society.

This random collage reveals the role of writing in sifting through experience as well as the trap María is in. Glorifying her fertility, her husband hastens to make her pregnant. The parallel between the Virgin Mary and her namesake as "hollow vessel, waiting to be filled" is irresistible. Furthermore, the implication is that creation

occurs not just through male participation but through male domination (Daly 83). The sinister nuns have guarded the "princess'" pedigreed virginity for the males to exercise control over it. The husband's perverse intent to sap María's "creative energy in all its dimensions" (Daly 60) burgeons with her pregnancy. The pattern is clear: when an oppressed daughter becomes a wife, she finds marriage saddled with the patriarchal evils of her primary family. If and when the husband becomes her second father, the major forms of despotism will be reinscribed, and the oppressed daughter merely graduates into the oppressed wife.

However, the "angelic" María for a time foils the sacrosanct designs her family has for her. In the final scene, she becomes (the Virgin) Mary's evil counterpart, Pandora, who has come into almost all European languages to denote "any source of multiple troubles" (Maerson 54). María strategically positions herself in the role of transgressor: she denies her new-born son baptism; she uses the Mater Admirabilis in parodia sacra as an aphrodisiac; she prostitutes herself for \$25 in a cheap hotel, where she trains not at the barre but on the tightrope. Her dance turns into acrobatics similar to those of her dare-devil double, Carmen Merengue, the circus performer. It is important to remember that, according to Bakhtin, the circus preserves in modern times the carnivalistic potential of ancient forms (Problems 131). Through carnival, the

"higher" forms of art access the "lower." The prima ballerina debases herself as the acrobat, her "feminine" attributes stridently masked by "thick rouge, false eyelashes, white pancake . . . and meteorite red hair" (115); the stage is the dusty hotel room; and death ultimately decrowns the beauty. Once the husband's true self is revealed (like Loys' in the ballet), nobody lives happily ever after in this rendition of the well-known tale. The young prince turns rapist, the young princess, victim. Androcracy reigns supreme, daughter conveniently replaced by grandson, better to perpetuate the interests of the Senior Patriarch. In his self-serving assessment, the Patriarch attributes his daughter's death to divine design rather than to human subterfuge. Now he can rest assured that, with female transgressor dead, property stays safely on the patriarchal side of the family.

In "The Youngest Doll" and "Sleeping Beauty," Ferré metes out death in much the same way as Woolf does in The Voyage Out—as punishment (du Plessis 50-51). The main female characters in all three texts are helplessly uncritical, inarticulate, and dialogically incompetent. They are unable to voice their rage at or act upon their status as women. In both Ferré's stories, woman's situation is more openly tied to issues of class and race than in Woolf's novel. Yet, the deaths can be interpreted in two ways: as refusal to enact the conventionally coded roles

assigned to women (Rachel fears and delays marriage; María and the woman-doll resist the maternal and sexual roles respectively assigned them after briefly surrendering to them) or as capitulation—inability to fight back.

Ferré's modification of Woolf's pioneering narrative structures is carnivalesque in Bakhtin's sense.² The use of the carnivalesque accounts for much of the difference between the two writers. A narrative structure worthy of a "spiritualist" becomes in Ferré's hands "materialistic". She could be an example for critics like Miliani and Rama who have asserted that Latin America in general appropriates European models by capitalizing on their potential for carnivalization (La literatura latinoamericana 61). As defined by Bakhtin, whose concern was to elucidate the source of Rabelais' work, the "carnavalesque" is a powerful, populist, critical inversion of all official words and hierarchies (Rabelais 219). Its use has far-reaching implications outside the specific study of Rabelais. For the Russian critic, carnival is a populist utopian inversion of the world as seen from below. Ferré's vision is so exuberantly carnivalesque that "The Gift" literally stages the festive ritual typical of European culture. In this story, carnival is so central that the conflict surrounds the very crowning of a carnival queen, a female transgressor in flagrant opposition to the serious dogma of the Catholic Church. More specifically, the story centers on the

conflict between the patrician Mother Artigas—"Corrector of Discipline" in a Puerto Rican all-girl academy—and two girls: Carlotta a parvenue, and Merceditas, who have struck up the typically troublesome alliance between an upper and upcoming class member. Mother Artigas' title is appropriate. She is in charge of encoding (and enforcing) all that a proper bourgeoisie maiden must be in order to conform to social norms. When Carlotta was proposed as a student at Sacred Heart, Mother Artigas had to take into consideration the fact that if the prestigious school is to enjoy the many financial benefits that Carlotta's father offers to bestow on it, she must relax the implacable school code that excludes girls of Carlotta's dubious background. But when Carlotta, a mulatta, preempts the position of carnival queen at the city's main event, the blue-blooded nun is horrified. So Carlotta with Merceditas' aid, engages in the rituals befitting a carnival queen. Her body becomes exuberantly sexual. She besmears her face with make-up, she designs her own robes and chooses shoddy accessories. In an effort to popularize an already popular festive event, Carlotta relaxes parade admission requirements to allow even the most socially handicapped to be in her entourage. To increase popular appeal, she bans foreign music and chooses Creole food for the banquet. The coronation ceremony is conducted at the hub of town activity: the middle of the plaza.

During the ceremony, the nun can only attack the grotesque quality of carnival as indecent. It is not until the end that scandalized, the nun "decrowns" the queen, cuts her hair, rips her uniform (all typical elements of carnivalesque dismemberment) (Problems 162) and later expels her from the academy. Failing to graduate, Carlotta loses her chance at upward social mobility. But as usual with Ferré's female transgressors, this one had strategically positioned herself to indulge in one brief moment of defiance. Before leaving, Carlotta presents Artigas with a mango, which had been given to her by the carnival committee at the time she was elected queen. At first soft and sweet, the fruit is the material "double" of the abstract Sacred Heart of Jesus because of its shape and its pulsating life. By the time it is presented to the nun, it is rotten. By handing the disintegrating mango to Artigas, Carlotta is challenging the Catholic dogma that "the believer must purify his soul" (106) in the Sacred Heart's burning flame, on which Artigas' whole institution has been founded. This heart is not for purifying. It is not alive but putrid. Carnival is for Ferré a subversive symbolical tool intended to illuminate the utopian urges of a writer who refuses to legitimate the views of the Puerto Rican upper class. In "The Gift," carnival is not just epistemological category but physical practice.

Carnival reinforces well Ferré's belief that the imagination has the power to conjure up a utopian world which finds a locus through writing. In Ferré's view, literature is politically charged; it is a means of effecting change. If Foucault's theories of discourse help us think of large, unified bodies of institutionalized knowledge with the capacity to exclude and discriminate against those who do not fit or conform (History of Sexuality I), Bakhtin's theory of carnival illuminates the moments of empowerment which serve to counter the ideological rut of those normally intimidated by those discourses. Carnival is a device for staging the normally repressed, the weaker, of certain binary structures through which a culture thinks itself. The serious is replaced by the jocular; the usual by the strange; and the abstract by the concrete. Because categories opposite to the ones normally prevailing predominate during carnival, it favors the presentation of a topsy-turvy world. In "The Gift," the "Asiatic splendor" of the festivities (110) explodes before the audience of xenophobic bourgeoisie which commonly suppresses the lower classes and controls their standards of comportment. The crowd from the slums of impoverished suburbs—usually subdued—gains the center stage (the hub of town activity: the plaza). In Ferré's work whenever territorial space is designated, it is invariably liminal (neither inside nor outside) because it is the space wherein

social transition takes place, the moment in which the rigid categories of an ossified reality unlock themselves. The "limen" is not simply a metaphor for marginality but plays a physical part in delineating transitional states. In his analysis of ritual patterns, Arnold van Gennep maintains that ". . . the entrance to a house or village, the movement from one room to another, or the crossings of streets and squares [effect cultural movement]." This identification explains why the passage from one group to another is so often symbolically placed under a portal or during an "opening of doors" (191-192). In this tale, that moment is brief—the pageant. The balcony is symbolically liminal (Stallybrass et al. 136); it frames the gaze of an eager Carlotta, socially banned from the festivities while she was growing up. During the pageant, gaze is replaced by touch, and desire is translated into the physical contact of moving bodies (Rabelais 255). She no longer witnesses; i.e., she has turned silent observation to personal and social advantage. So for a merry moment, Carlotta has the power to organize the people "outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive" (Rabelais 255), obliterating castes (251). Carnival is for Ferré a subversive symbolical tool intended to illuminate the utopian urges of a writer who refuses to legitimize the views of the Puerto Rican upper class.

Wayne Booth has objected to Bakhtin's critical failure to recognize a woman's voice (145-176). However, Bakhtin does illuminate those moments in which a woman positions herself strategically to fight back; her effectiveness is judged not by what she says but by what she does. So in "When Women Love Men," Ferré conceives of still another less ritualistic but longer-lived retaliation. Two rivals—Isabel Luberza, the widow of a once-successful sugarcane aristocrat, and Isabel la Negra, a small town madam, his lover—seize the opportunity to turn the old patriarch's manipulation into common profit. The story recounts the moment (memorable as the archetypal encounter between rivals with smatterings of truth about one another) in which the women meet for the first time presumably to discuss—though the discussion takes place outside the text—their inheritance: one single house, the marital, to be divided equally between the two. In the end, the life-long rivals unite in a clever business partnership. They turn conjugal home (the private sanctum) into elegant brothel (a place for public depravity) and divide the resulting income between them. Thus, the old patriarch's paltry inheritance scandalously turns both wife and lover a profitable income from prostitution. But beyond the strictly material, their previously silenced voices turn into a dialogue one with the other although each would prefer to think the other did not exist (Bauer 680).

In a recently published essay on the genesis of this story, Ferré addresses her unconscious apprenticeship in the development of the double-character (The Youngest Doll 148), a technique which allows a dialogue among as many as three antagonistic (social, ideological, stratified) voices. Ferré had heard such a dialogue during her childhood and adolescence. Though Isabel la Negra once had a real-life counterpart in the history of Ponce (Ferré's birthplace), Isabel Luberza represented the bourgeois Everywoman, cognizant of her husband's infidelity. To balance the two, Ferré confers on both a first-person point of view which, each focusing on the other, is conversely revealing of the "speaker." Thus, the prostitute's sexuality is exposed side by side with the wife's frigidity; the lover's darkness with the wife's fairness. Adding yet another voice—a third-person objective point of view not univocally the author's—Ferré furthers commentary. These three voices carry oppositional elements that reduce the distance between the two women and evenly contrast them. They, at the same time, point to other formal devices that reveal their similarities: each woman's braided hair, her finger-nail polish and compelling beauty. But I am far from implying that these formal devices entirely obliterate the differences between the two. It is to the credit of the "rivals" that they have a practical understanding of the ways in which forms of oppression oddly intertwine

systematically to trap them. Especially, they perceive that the person who is disabled through one set of oppressions may—by the same positioning—be enabled through others. For instance, Isabel Luberza's proud use of her married name makes graphic both her subordination to Ambrosio as a woman and her privilege over his lover. Or, again, the vulnerability of women of all races should not veil the racist assumption that Luberza as a white woman is privileged over la Negra as a black. It is precisely the depth of their understanding that both their oppressions are not congruent, but differently structured, that makes their alliance so brilliant.

Conceived as an exchange between voices within two interior monologues, "When Women Love Men" minimizes outward action. Yet it singles out the close relationship between social transition and territorial space through the limen in the same way that "The Gift" does. In this story, the "limen" is just as essential. First, Isabel's house of prostitution is situated in the "arrabal." The Spanish term—translated into English as "slum" (138)—means "neighborhood outside the city limits; outer limits of a city." In other words, the house of prostitution is not outside the law but in a liminal relation to it. Physically moving the bordello into the sanctioned architectural space, Isabel Luberza's residence, la Negra launches herself and her career "into" the law as it were.³ Second, place in

this story is invariably liminal when place is denoted. Isabel la Negra sits in the balcony (inside-outside) and gloats over her prospective future. On the other hand, Isabel Lubberza stands at the threshold (outside-inside) of her rival's door, and face to face with her, admires her beauty. Because of Ambrosio's death, both are in transition, in the process of undoing Ambrosio's divide-and-conquer tactics. The limen is the place where, after the women physically approach one another, the difference between the two, though acknowledged, is no longer in exacerbating opposition.

These double-characters function as the obverse and the reverse of a single coin. Their names capture their duality cleverly suggesting sibling selves: they are unified by having the same first name and differentiated by apposition.⁴ In this manner, the female body—traditionally conceived in phallogocentric discourse as disassociated and dual in nature—is fused. The mind/body duality—which produces such antitheses as mother, wife, virgin, angel on the one hand, and femme fatale, lover, prostitute, monster on the other—collapses. In Ferré's work, these paradigmatic polarities are fused. But as Mary Daly perceptively asserts, the reason for rejecting rigid splits is not that feminist analysis glosses over distinctions, but rather that one needs to be free to discover one's own distinctions, discarding patriarchally

defined categories like "the sacred" and "the profane" (48), or associations of the feminine with nature and the immobile.

The relationship between the two Isabels is reminiscent of the bond (much less dependent on "the body") that exists in Mrs. Dalloway between ladylike Clarissa and bomb-shelled Septimus Smith. But whereas in Ferré the two characters are brought into close contact from the beginning, in Woolf their explicit duality is not revealed until the final scene. The relationship between Woolf's characters—like that of Ferré's—is almost always one of balanced antithesis. Clarissa's love of life is balanced by Septimus' urges toward self-annihilation. Clarissa is associated with a movement upward, that reflects vitality; Septimus is, in the main, associated with a movement downward, that reflects despair. Clarissa experiences, towards the end of the novel, the "wave of divine vitality" that carries her from the party to the attic; on the other hand, Septimus succumbs to the despair that drives him to plunge to his death. The two characters are in balanced contrast even after Septimus's death. Both are connected with the action of flinging something away—Septimus throws away his life; Clarissa flings a shilling into the serpentine. At the end, these doubles are brought into unity. When Clarissa learns of Septimus' death, she thinks,

. . . that young man had killed himself. Somehow it was her disaster, her disgrace. She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad he had done it, thrown it away. (282-83)

Clarissa is then granted the "vision" of Septimus' suicide, a vivid vision of life disintegrating which is followed by her perception of reality—of life integrating. Then, she thinks,

He had thrown himself from the window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness. They went on living (she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming). (280)

As Mrs. Dalloway makes these connections explicit, she wears "a silver-green mermaid's dress" (264). The term is appropriate because while a mermaid curvets over the waves, Clarissa heaves, soaring to heights and plunging to depths. In the two texts, the connection between the doubles is perfectly in keeping with Ferré's and Woolf's habitual refusal to accentuate antitheses. Strangers to one another, Septimus and Clarissa walk through the streets of London one June day in 1922, sharing more than life-long friends do. Conversely, the life-long rivalry between the Isabels strategically ends in shared profit. In Woolf, sanity and insanity, life and death, self-hood and non-entity, self-preservation and suicide are not opposites. In Ferré, neither are promiscuity and chastity, sexuality and frigidity, indiscriminateness and fastidiousness.

"Doubling" is perhaps Ferré's most forceful mode of resistance. In "Fables of the Bleeding Heron" (1982), a collection of miscellaneous texts, Ferré continues to take to task the origins of Woman as cultural construct. She destabilizes the fable as genre and, as García Pinto indicates, she "re-writes mythology by using the infinite possibilities offered by fiction" (98). Ferré's intention continues to be to subvert, "displace" in du Plessis' terms, Western myths by giving them entirely new plots.⁵ The implication is that when those myths are re-written, the old versions are un-written, as it were, with the effect that their normative power is deliberately deflated. In this new context, the all-female personae are active participants in, not passive witnesses to, events that engulf them. They are no longer objects of male desire but desirous. Thus, Desdemona's hand pours deadly poison into Othello's vial; Medusa is Perseus' prisoner by choice; Mary Magdalene caresses the cold body of Jesus in the Sepulchre; and Ariadne not only leaves Theseus, but she also consciously aborts the Minotaur. In Maldito Amor (1986), Ferré extends the use of this political strategy as a frontal assault, this time, on a staple of Puerto Rican literature, the so-called "novela de la tierra" (12). She resorts to the foreword as the conventional means of delivering an "explanation" of her intent. Parody allows Ferré consciously to disavow the canonical posture of her male

precursors and most notorious practitioners of the genre—Renée Márquez and de Laguerre. Their foundational myths linked a romantic yearning for an idyllic past centered on the land with a strong sense of nationalism. Writing against the grain as it were, Ferré dispels what Renato Rossaldo appropriately calls "imperialist nostalgia," the tender recollection of what is at once an earlier epoch and a previous phase of life" (70). She vigorously asserts that the past was no better, and most probably worse, than the present. Ferré avers that the posture of those writers was always problematic because it glossed over the insufficiency of land in a country where land is so obviously scarce (the island is a mere one-hundred miles long by thirty-five miles wide). More significant still, in the 1950s—at the time those portrayals were produced—the ideals of a harmonious feudalism organized around undulating fields of sugar cane was already being eroded by the sweeping industrialization of the land.

But the text that follows problematizes the deceptively simple "explanation" delivered by the preface. The tough "correction" undertaken in Maldito Amor is imparted by women for the most part. They are recurrent figures with a subversive role. They contest, debunk, destabilize and ultimately impede the novelist's progress towards a definitive "official story" that pedestals Ubaldino De la Valle as Guamaní's "patrician statesman" (24). Their

multiple versions of the melodramatic saga of his family cast constant doubts on any one lapidary version of his story. Gloria, the mulatto daughter-in-law; Titina, the black servant; and Laura, Ubaldino's dying wife, break the "foggy silence," "the mute despair" (14) of first-generation women like Elvira. Each radically questions forms of "official" stasis.⁶ Thus, this novel illustrates what Jean Franco asserts: the destiny of her women is intimately tied to that of Puerto Rico (XIII). In so far as they strive to change their destiny they also change the destiny of their island.

Coincidentally, the title poem of the collection Fables of the Bleeding Heron stages the gap between woman and her inscription, most eloquently expressed in her encounter with the patriarchal book either mythical and/or historical. The poem uses birth imagery to describe self-creation. Ferré combines here what has been already established as her favorite mode of resistance—doubling—with a mirror scene. This scene reinforces Sylvia Molloy's findings that these encounters are not only specular but spectacular (1991, 112). In a duplication of the poetic subject with the capacity "to reflect itself by itself" that proves Luce Irigaray's mimetism correct, this fable features the mirror—a prop "most often hidden"—and a divided self with the capacity to consciously "interrogate the conditions under which it reproduces itself" (Irigaray 74-75). The

histrionics of the scene are underscored by the corporeality of the woman/heron, one that openly unifies mental and physical labor with (pro)creativity. The blood evokes not just the exultant pain of giving birth but also the endless cycles of menstruation and the invasion of the female body by the male. It is interesting to compare the poem to a nineteenth-century poem like Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's "The Other Side of the Mirror," in which another literary woman stares at a specular image and guesses at the truth to be uttered (Gilbert & Gubar 76). In the nineteenth-century poem, truth is elusive and unutterable through the wounded and bleeding mouth. Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's speechless speaker seeks to unify herself by coming to terms with her own fragmentation—she strives to "set the crystal surface of the mirror free" from frightful images. In the twentieth century poem "truth" emerges as a swan song of sorts through the whole of a gashed body. Ferré's speaker, squalling and bloody, shatters the inscription and the mirror/book that has long reflected what women were presumed to be.

The reflection shattered is none other than the representation of a gap she cannot breach, a gap in which her image as created by men is at odds with what she wants to be ("Desentrañando la Polifonía de la Marginalidad" 45). The mirror image, sister to the familiar motif in fairy tale discourse ("Sleeping Beauty") and to the reflection in the story of Narcissus ("Isolda's Mirror"), is related to

Lacan's concept of the "mirror stage." According to Lacan, the (male) child's view of himself as a unitary whole in the mirror launches him out of the pre-Oedipal Imaginary into a linear process of ego formation and through the Oedipal stage into the Symbolic Order of the father. In other words, it signals the passage from a state of undifferentiation into one of personhood. The evolution of the ego from the fictional "imago" in the mirror stage means, for Lacan, that the self is first formed in fundamental alienation. The imago captures an illusion of wholeness which allows the infant to outgrow fragmentation (Écrits 12). Ethological studies have proven that the dove needs the sight of another dove or of herself for her gonads to mature. In contrast to Lacanian theory, the source of alienation of the fabled character of Ferré's poem (appropriately a bird) is ultimately ideological. The image in the mirror represents the cultural formation of a frozen femininity (symmetrical with and opposite to the woman staring) whose epitome of beauty is the mythical Helen of Troy. In the dramatic monologue through which this woman's story emerges, the speaker wonders whether she can argue with the "victory" of her alienated double. In the double's name, worlds have been destroyed, temples raised, antiphons and preludes composed, and projectiles intercepted (73-79). Consistent with a mode of subverting the unitary subject which the nineteenth century speaker strives to integrate,

this speaker in contrast possesses two souls, two hearts but one body (41-42); she feels she is as a woman, both pedestal and doormat (36; 107).

This poem also textualizes Cixous' early utopian ideal of "female" production in "The Laugh of the Medusa."

Likened to a bleeding heron—a comparison in tune with Cixous' assertion that "women take after birds" (252)—from the first stanza this speaker is filled with an urge to author, which she laboriously accomplishes in the last one.⁷ At the beginning, she summons the body from which she has been "violently driven away" (244). She says,

no es mi cuerpo el que canta, es mi espacio, no es
mi presencia fiel, sino mi ausencia . . .

it is not my body that sings, it is my space, it
is not my faithful presence, but my absence.
(21-24)

Although the speaker insists on her corporeality, men have always insisted on the abstract qualities that fetishize her attributes. Her eyes are immaterial; the madrigal those eyes inspired is relevant (23). Half-way through the poem, she has a transformation. She rejects the image of the well-groomed lady (her double)—half-starved, with eyebrows plucked and hairless armpits (138)—to embrace the image of the Medusa (an interesting choice which once again brings echoes of Cixous), with locks of serpents pullulating. Finally, a cry pours forth, which shatters the mirror. She writes her name in white ink (of the mother's milk); and delivers her brain-child (song/poem) on the floor. The

reference to "weaving" (171) aligns this protagonist with the mythical weavers—Arachne, Philomela, Helen and Penelope—who while men engaged in the "arid exercise of war" ("Contracanto" 111-113) "wove", not to conceal but "to reveal, to engage, to counter male violence" (Heilbrun 120). However, her anxiety is closer to theirs than it is to Cixous' who grants the woman artist a cry blissful at best and sardonic at worst; Ferré grants the Latin-American counterpart a cry as tortured as that of a woman in labor. Still, the metaphoric complex of birth images that concludes the poem ties it once again with a later Cixous text, Souffles, which conjoins natural and textual delivery.

At the center of Ferré's tampering with myth, the earliest of male-made productions, is her radical attempt at toppling from the pedestal of "truth" the image of woman which has, at least since Aristotle, placed her in a subordinate position in the sexual hierarchy. In "Contracanto," Helen of Troy is explicitly referred to as a compelling beauty "invented by Homer" (57-58), and as such, a textual conception. Ferré's foremost strategy is to "correct" the scandalous mutism of women which makes them lovely but silent cameos. Through this strategy, she draws from what Tania Modleski in Feminism Without Women has called Woolf's "distinctive accomplishment" in A Room of One's Own, which was "to have given a name, a desire, and a history to one of the mute females who lived and died in

obscurity." Modleski is referring to Woolf's imaginative elaboration on Shakespeare's sister Judith, a young, talented actress who chooses to end her own life after finding herself pregnant by a stage manager. Modleski explains that:

every time a feminist critic speaks and writes as a woman in a world that has always conspired to silence and negate women she brings into being a new order and enacts the scandal of the speaking body in a far more profound way than those people already authorized to speak by virtue of their gender. (53) (author's emphasis)

This passage echoes Foucault. In discussing sex and power, he maintains that when sex is condemned to silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a transgression; but one who renders silence into words places oneself outside the reach of power, heralds a new law, anticipates freedom ("We Other Victorians" 295).

Ferré knows the tactical efficacy of such positioning. In order to subvert one must transgress. Ferré's transgressor character is always the challenger. Even Juan Bobo, the most doltish of her creations, like Bakhtin's fool (Rabelais 260, and Dialogic Imagination 162-163), is defiant of the status quo. In the story, he is appropriately opposed to the pious and the fearful of God. Erroneously thinking that he has arrived for Mass, one Sunday morning Juan Bobo enters a private baptismal reception. When the refined crowd finish their meal, he timidly approaches the elegant tables and helps himself to the remains of the

lavish banquet. Spurred by such a treat, the following Sunday he repairs to what he thinks is the same place only to find himself really at church during Mass. This time the food—dry wafers and holy water—is nothing he can get excited about. When, famished, he helps himself to a handful of wafers, priest and acolytes expel him in indignation. Back at home, Juan Bobo shares the incident with his mother, and with the logic of a simpleton, he verbalizes an ineluctable truth: the church reeks of ceremony (blazing candelabra and immaculate tablecloths do catch Juan Bobo's eye), but there is no food for the poor. Tacitly, his statement is also critical of the baptism itself wherein food was plentiful, the crowd gracious, but the ceremony non-existent (Sonatinas 55-57).

Notes

1. Berta López Morales, in the article entitled "Language of the Body," makes a very similar analysis of Lucía Guerra's text, Más allá de las máscaras. Splintering Darkness (129).
2. María Solá in "Habla Feminina e Ideología Feminista en Papeles de Pandora" makes reference to the appropriateness of Bakhtin's carnival to a study of Ferré's text. However, she never carries the dialogue with Bakhtin any further than referring to it (Alero I, 1 (1982)). Elsa Arroyo, in a much more thorough analysis, concentrates on Bakhtin and "Maquinolandería" and the last short-story in Maldito Amor (33-46).
3. As Jean Franco reminds us, the privatized Hispanic house and the virtual confinement of married women to the home was not only required by the Church but also intended to ensure the purity of blood that Spanish society had imposed after the war against the Moors. The wife's immobility is clearly related to racism and the protection of inheritable property ("Beyond Ethnocentrism" 507).
4. Ferré seems fond of reinforcing the relationship between doubles with related similes of balanced inversion. Accordingly, Alicia/Elisa, the orphaned twin sisters in "Pico Rico Mandorico," are shadows of one another. Likewise, in "The Fox Fur Coat," the twin siblings Bernardo/Marina have an understanding of one another similar to that of "the right to the left hand; or, of talking in terms of one heart, the systole and diastole" (37).
5. I know of two other writers who work mythopoeia in similar manner: Anne Sexton in the American poetic tradition and the late Angela Carter in British fiction. Like Ferré, both writers zero in on the fairy-tale to expose its conservatism and its anti-feminism.
6. Because the counternarrative is articulated by women, I do not agree with Sara Castro-Klarén, who views Maldito Amor as the beginning of a shift which Ferré completes with the publication of Eccentric Neighborhoods (1993). In this shift, she says, Ferré turns from the question of women to a national narrative (Review 34).

7. Let us remember that for Cixous écrire is synonymous with voler, meaning both "to rob" and "to fly," to reappropriate and to soar.

CHAPTER THREE

REMOTE INSCRIPTIONS: TO THE LIGHTHOUSE AND THE WAVES IN JULIETA CAMPOS' CARIBBEAN

. . . vaya mi esfuerzo a sumarse al
de tantas mujeres, desconocidas ó
célebres, como en el mundo han
trabajado.

Victoria Ocampo

The work of Julieta Campos is proof of the danger of adopting essentialist positions that assume all Spanish-American writing to be political. This claim is made by Bell G. Chevigny, who maintains that writing by Spanish-American women in particular is political because they adopt a more necessary bonding between self and society than their Anglo-American counterparts. Yet, Campos' concerns—ranked by the very same critic as among the most private and personal (151-152)—merely seem to be nonpolitical. Born in Cuba in 1932, and educated in France, Campos has lived in Mexico since 1955. She has had a distinguished career as a prolific writer of fiction, a literary critic, and a translator. With the novel Tiene los Cabellos Rojizos y se llama Sabina (1974)/She has Reddish Hair and Her Name is Sabina (1993), she won the prestigious Xavier Villaurrutia Prize.

Sabina is a novel that defies classification. Most critics agree on little more than its reflexive, fragmentary, and obsessively repetitive nature. The few efforts to approach this text have been mostly channeled through the French tradition. Verani recognizes its links with Mauriac's L'Aggrandissement; Bruce Novoa likens the absence of character development and dialogue to Robbe-Grillet. Paley Francescato has rightly pointed out both the inadequacy of critical discourse in tackling it and the defiance it evidences against the modernist dictum elaborated by Ortega y Gasset—in which novels necessarily belong to one genre like animals to a particular species (161). Hugo Verani calls it a novel totally devoid of the specificity given by the anecdotal (145)—an effect which Barthes calls the deflation of the paradigm of realism. Unfortunately, not only are all these readings indicative of puzzlement at the absence of the conventionally anecdotal, but also none of them is able to account for the format of the novel in its entirety. Recently in a one-sentence statement, Klarén-Molloy-Sarlo have come closest, describing it brilliantly. They have called Sabina "the inner adventure of a search for glimpses of meaning and awareness of the self in memory" (68).

My reading is in tune with their thematic description, but it proposes to access this oftentimes called "difficult" book in ways that will account for, if not the whole, at

least most of, its format. I argue that the efficacy of any one approach peters out with Sabina. The novel uses a variety of tactics which in an uncanny way anticipates the rigors of later post-structuralist theory. Among others are disruption of the rules of conventional fictional decorum; crystallization of diverse conceptual shifts in our understanding of representation, and ambivalence towards textual authority. But one approach smoothly congruous with Sabina is found in Bakhtin's theory of language. Campos' own propensity for finding musical metaphors to describe the writing endeavor makes her texts a congenial ground for the application of Bakhtin's concept of language as polyphonic. In her metaphorical terms, a novel is a musical composition with variations (Imagen 85). In Sabina, she calls the writer "an empty sounding board" on which the magnified echoes of other magnified voices converge (67); and a "herald" (spokesperson) through whose mouth other voices may be heard. The Spanish term she uses in this last case is "portavoz," literally "he or she who transports the voice." She is likewise aware of the "dialogue"—her choice of words as much as it is Bakhtin's (Imagen 83)—unavoidably triggered (quite apart from authorial intention) by other utterances articulated within the same genre.

With Bakhtin's aid the intertextual train of association so self-consciously Sabina's can be theorized as a chain of eruptions of elements, normally submerged or

implicit, which suddenly make their presence felt. This dynamic of emergence can also be compared to Kristeva's model of language, in which a pre-linguistic "semiotic" element tears through the surface of ordinary "symbolic" language with disruptive force, especially in poetic texts ("Revolution in Poetic Language" 113 and passim). Bakhtin also opens up the possibility of exploring the confluence and conflict of ideological positions in utterance because the authorial subject is not a tabula rasa but a palimpsest of literary traditions and culture. Bakhtin's views allow us to regard the author as an orchestrator, the resourceful conductor of a chorus of ideological voices, whose own voice is refracted in and through others (184). Thus, every writer—male or female—is the site of a dual struggle: one waged against all the voices struggling to be heard (69) and another against the powerful imprint/influence of precursors.

A shift from Papeles de Pandora through Bakhtin to Sabina confirms these texts as an arena for linguistic interaction. But the interaction is of two different natures. In Papeles, it is the intermingling of a large number of versatile linguistic registers. All of them are "speech genres"—concrete individual utterances belonging to various spheres of human activity and communication (Speech Genres and Other Essays 62). They are assembled with a good dose of irony. Without claiming knowledge of Ferré's

intentions, I see that one point made again and again in her texts is that the mannered upper-middle-class conceal a less than lower-middle-class soul. Found in the utterances are, among others, slogans from the world of haute fashion; advertisements imported by the north; the language of all-girl Catholic schools; Spanglish; the diction of exaggerated deference of maids and servants; the patronizing condescension of patriarchs; the words of popular songs in the cadences of salsa; the interminable small-talk of beauty parlors; the sugary protectiveness of mothers towards husbands and children, especially daughters. In Sabina, on the other hand, though the struggle of registers is just as ironic, it is far less dependent on contemporary speech patterns and the social milieu. Rather, it mostly relies on texts and textuality. Campos mocks interviewers by reiterating the question most asked of the most interviewed writers: "¿Qué piensa del boom de la novela hispanoamericana?"/"what do you think of the boom of the Latin American novel?" (23). She reproduces the bookish dialogue on matters of interest to the literary-minded such as potential best-sellers and the "Latin Freakshow" of characters. She mentions the commonplaces of the field: Macondo, Martí's 'Nuestra América' ("This America of Ours"), and literary epigraphs by the now famous, such as "Latin America, a novel without novelists."

Sabina dramatizes feminist hyper-anxiety about textual authority. With Sabina, Campos established in her fiction an opposition to the Spanish-American male tradition uncannily like that of Woolf to the English. Years ago, Bruce Novoa attempted a description of Sabina as "a feminist deconstruction of male logocentrism" that clearly linked Campos with the British writer (88). In the preface to the belated English translation of this novel, just recently published, Leland Chambers hails Sabina more specifically "as a feminist work that attempts to dislodge the prevailing logocentrism of our culture" (XV). I will attempt a reading that combines both these interpretations but which also identifies two central figures of textual authority, who breed considerable anxiety of influence: Borges and Woolf. Through Borges, Campos secures for herself a steady footing inside the tradition into which she was born. Then, capitalizing on her extensive readings of the modernist European text, she strategically undermines concepts detrimental to her as a woman writer. Extending Virginia Woolf, she directs a critique at the patriarchal underpinnings of the cultural practices that subtend representation. Though Campos is obviously less interested than Ferré in the "outwardly" patriarchal edifice—state, church and family—she is equally engaged in an articulate dialogue with Woolf's feminism. Even though I am aware of Campos' blunt rejection of that label early in 1978 (Beth

Miller 123), in Sabina, she implicitly subscribes to the thesis that the experience of women trying to write is not exactly analogous to that of men. In other words, my reading recovers Sabina for feminism, without fear of inconsistency. Borrowing from Linda Hutcheon's The Politics of Postmodernism, I argue that postmodernism (embodied in Borges) offers Campos the first impetus towards change while feminism (embodied in Woolf) endows the struggle towards change with the momentum needed to effect it.

In Border Crossings (1993), Henry Giroux elaborates on the corrective capabilities of the disparate discourses of modernism, postmodernism, and feminism. Unlike Hutcheon's, Giroux's agenda is didactic. His argument is that together those discourses have the potential of curing their own weaknesses. To name just one of the numerous points that Giroux raises, he argues that postmodernism challenges the humanist notion of the subject as a free, unified, stable, and coherent self. It re-writes, in its stead, a subject produced through signifying practices which precede it, a subject incapable of originating meaning (39-83). Therefore, like Hutcheon, Giroux maintains that these discourses can integrate their best insights into a political project which, in his case, is the democratic project.

If the ideological charge is above and beyond any writer's control, women find the charge doubly loaded. In

the Western World, centrality is formulated thus: Man (White, European) is the unified, self-appointed center of the world. As man, father, possessor of the phallus, he is the subject of the world. All the rest—the Other—have meaning only in relation to him. If to this we add the role of the father as bearer of culture and language—a stand enunciated in Lacanian theory—the patriarchal structure of society continually reproduces itself because speaking and writing are means of appropriating the world, of dominating it through verbal mastery. The desire to be the subject of meaning is the desire to have the Other. For a woman, access to a culture steeped in phallic symbols is doubly traumatic. As authorial subject and as woman, the female is in a doubly marginal position. When she undertakes to write, to speak, or to read "against" the silencing voice of patriarchy—which Campos unquestionably does—intertextuality turns into a battlefield where she faces the omissions and exclusions of the past. In that respect "feminine" and "masculine" texts are different and antagonistic (Franco 41), not just in terms of sexual difference—the privileged paradigmatic—but rather in terms of all differences, including racial, cultural, and socio-economic. For instance, Elaine Showalter maintains that women authors are individuals who react in a collective, sisterly manner to a common social reality of oppression so

that the example set by other realities, no matter how foreign, is always pertinent.

In Sabina Campos violates all the rules of conventional fictional decorum and carries Woolf's ideas to incommensurable extremes. She discards "comedy, tragedy, love interest, and . . . air of probability" ("Modern Fiction" 149); and abides by Woolf's injunction that absolutely everything is "the proper stuff of fiction—every feeling, every thought, every quality of brain and spirit" (153). If Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway and Joyce's Ulysses depict the longest days in English fiction, Campos' Sabina comprises the longest minute in Spanish. Campos textualizes Woolf's legendary disruption of the spaces registered by clock time and suspends it the duration of a single hyper-extended minute. The reference to markers of chronological time so frequent in Woolf's fiction—the palpability of minutes ticking, of bells chiming, and of the hour striking—is foregone in Sabina for an equally reiterative reference to the time of day: four o'clock in the summer afternoon on the eighth of May, 1971. Both writers accomplish the expansion of the moment, otherwise muted and visible. Woolf fills it with the flood of consciousness and Campos, with the flow of a subjectivity made up of texts.

Campos rejects the fixity of plot (Writer's Diary Nov. 28, 1928, 136) so completely that there is practically no plot to discuss. Simply stated, the recessive "plot" of

this non-narrative narrative consists of the ramblings of a polyphonic, dialogic, disembodied voice, engaged in the recreation of some undefined but clearly transcendent vision during which, for a brief moment, everything made sense. Its flow is the more conspicuous by contrast to Sabina's static female body. She stares vacantly towards the ocean off Acapulco on a summer afternoon at the end of both a seven-day stay at the beach and the holiday season. In symmetry with her voice/body stands the sea/promontory. Occasionally the two-hundred-page-long paragraph, that quite literally arrests the moment in an effort to capture it, makes graphic the extended interior monologue and provides laconic clues to whatever minimal action there is. One such clue is that Sabina holds a camera in her hand. Its appearance limns solutions to important issues inherent to Sabina. Because its referent is frozen in time, photography instantly places viewers in a reflective mood, requiring them to make a connection between the flow of experience and the image reproduced in the camera. Also, the camera reproduces mechanically as it fixes reality permanently. Human memory, on the other hand, is selective, and it changes through time. Sabina is ready to use the camera as an expedient means of capturing her vision at first glimpse. But later she discards this idea, like so many others that she contemplates briefly.

So Woolf's multiple-character flood of consciousness changes into Campos' single-character search for the voice of feminine "I," a search that reveals the paucity of female systems of representation, the terms of representation itself being male. An avid reader in at least three languages, this labile narrator (who proliferates into numerous narrators) inserts herself (like Campos) into pre-existing narratives, appropriating them in an effort to be seen and, more important perhaps, in an effort to see herself (Marcus, Reading Woman 132-133). The novel is a mosaic of allusion—textual and otherwise—mostly to canonized male anthologists—institutionalized fabulators, magic realists, anti-realists and metafictionalists. The voice is obvious evidence of a subjectivity generated not so much by a thinking subject as by prior discourse. This voice swings between a doomed referential function:

(Todo intento de formulación literaria de las aventuras de la conciencia es, por su naturaleza misma, un artificio, como toda expresión, mediante palabras, de la realidad es una ficción)

(Every attempt at devising literary formulas for the adventures of a human conscience is, by its very nature, an artifice, just as any expression of reality through words is a fiction)

and an intertextual interference that it can never escape and which leads to rambling:

(¿Te atreverías a describir el Caribe después de Carpentier?) (107)

(Would you dare to describe the
Caribbean after Carpentier?) (68)

This interference delineates the relationship between the writer (as authorial subject) and any textual manifestation of another text—linguistic or non-linguistic—either external (rapport of one with another), or internal (rapport of one with itself), implicit or explicit. It is characterized by its plurality and its complexity. But the rambling—to some extent free-associative—is not desultory. The setting for the future novel is never really chosen; instead, a series of literary associations with similar landscapes are triggered. Elsinore with its rocky shores is one compelling example.

So while a potent tide pulls by means of these intertextual associations, an equally powerful undertow is oriented towards (but never succeeds in) a philological quest to extricate "things" from the "grid" of discourse. Foucault has eloquently proven that discourse has become more important than that which it discusses. In The History of Sexuality I, he argues that the multiplicity of discourses orbiting around sex—from the Christian confessional to the psychiatrist's couch—have succeeded in displacing the sexual act per se. Furthermore, they have succeeded in exchanging the pleasures of sex for the pleasure found in the production of "truths" about the pleasures of sex (71). Likewise, crime and punishment are themselves subsumed by the discourse about them.

Technicians in the field—wardens, doctors, chaplains, educators, penal personnel—have created a "verbal machinery" that has acquired the solidity of a monument (Discipline and Punish 1977). With "things" and "words" thus severed from one another, the "profound kinship of language with the world" disappears (The Order of Things 43). The potency of language enigmatically exceeds the power of what it purports to signify. This detour into one of Foucault's primary concepts is useful because one of Sabina's main concerns is precisely the crippling power of pre-existing textuality about the Caribbean, the setting for the novel, a setting already "heavy" with the weight of other renditions. Pondering what the Caribbean really is, one of Sabina's narrators maintains: "They say [it] is always baroque . . . [it] is a space of dreams, of men with angel's wings and with beaches splendorously white" (155). Those are the renditions of García Márquez and Carpentier, who have preempted the subject of the Caribbean with many incomparable flourishes of the imagination. Therefore, as if adopting Foucault's rhetorical tactic, the narrator reformulates the "what-question" into a "how-question." How does she, she asks again, find her way back to that "origin," that "seed" (42) which is deeply buried under the weight of the grid of discourse.¹

The difficulty in categorizing Sabina is partly due to its crystallization of diverse conceptual shifts in our

understanding of representation. Those shifts have far-reaching implications outside the realm of literature. One such shift is from the Christian eschatological, linear notion of time—that in turn evolved into the secular belief in progress toward some better place or moment—into a notion of history as endless flux without telos. It seems that in order to unequivocally define the treatment of time in specific works, critics must resort to juxtaposing other narratives that define the treatment of temporality. For example, Frank Kermode has proved that questions of history and narratology are related. He has established a direct correspondence between the fictions by which we order the world and the "real" history of the world. Human recognition of its own mortality, he said, hinges upon the larger order of things: an apocalyptic view of the world. If human life must come to an end, so must the world. In order to impose some order on the scheme of things, the end must be related to what preceded and, in a sense, determined it. In other words, fictional endings are no more than intimations of the closure of human life (The Sense of an Ending 64). Hillis Miller supplemented Kermode's thesis by further drawing a connection between the formal structure of a novel and the emergence of meaning, between the unfolding of the characters' lives and the gradual revelation of their destinies. The assumptions about history which were transferred to the conventional concept of fiction included:

. . . the notions of origin and end ("archeology" and "teleology"); of unity and totality or "totalization;" of underlying "reason" or "ground;" of selfhood, consciousness, or "human nature;" of the homogeneity, linearity, and continuity of time, of necessary progress; of "fate," "destiny," or "Providence;" of causality, of gradually emerging "meaning;" or representation and truth. . . . (459-60)

Miller also identifies other metaphors—flowing water, woven cloth, living organism—that inevitably recur as tropes—to lend structure to the linearity of history. Because the assumptions that buttress the relation between history and fiction constitute a true system, no one part can be considered in isolation without engaging the whole system in rigorous questioning. So the second shift is necessarily related to the first. It involves a shift away from the humanist belief in a pre-existing self unique and autonomous, shakily anchored somewhere (who can say where?) in an "inner" core of being—to a decentered subjectivity, profoundly social.

Thus causal plot as the simulacrum of both a teleological view of history and a rectilinear view of time which legitimate the patriarchal society are eschewed in Sabina in favor of the emergence of the subjectivity understood as flux. Because "the destiny of the character is not written" (72), her subjectivity is defiant of "continuities of origin leading to aim leading to end" (Hillis Miller "Narrative and History" 473). It is absolutely dispersed, never a fixed or stable whole, nowhere

oriented. It is always no more (and no less) than a perpetual state of possibilities in flux, a state that subverts the notion of telos. So Sabina proposes a sense of unending and, consistent with it, a subjectivity posited as an activity. In an essay called "Street Haunting," Woolf, too, queried the conventional understanding of a discrete and autonomous subjectivity in light of the potentialities of fluctuation:

Is the true self this which stands at the pavement in January, or that which bends over the balcony in June? Am I here or am I there? Or is the true self neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but something so varied and wandering that it is only when we give rein to its wishes and let it take its way unimpeded that we are, indeed, ourselves. Circumstances compel unity; for convenience sake a man must be a whole. The good citizen when he opens his door in the evening must be banker, golfer, husband, father, not a nomad wandering the desert When he opens the door he must run his fingers through his hair and put his umbrella in the stand like the rest. (Woolf [1928] 161)²

And in "Modern Fiction" she asks, "Is life like this? Must novels be like this?" and describes the proper content of fiction:

Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display

with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (106)

With both Woolf and Campos, we must understand subjectivity as an activity, never finished, profoundly anchored in the social. We must also understand reading, or interpretation per se, as invention of the self.

Another shift enacted by the diverse and multilingual tissue of allusion in Sabina ultimately questions the boundaries of books. Sabina dissolves the solid distinction between fictional and critical texts. An intertextual dialogue with Campos' own brand of criticism fares far better as reinforcement of the Derridean pronouncement that there is nothing extraneous to a text; nothing "outside" the boundaries of text (foreword and after-word being the handiest examples) can be imposed to explain its "inside" workings and execution. This pronouncement also implies that one is free to develop intertextual dialogues of any kind by juxtaposing biography with literature, history with criticism, and ultimately, criticism with literature. In Sabina, this dialogue makes the boundaries of texts fluid so that they overflow book covers, thus dismissing the notion that texts are autonomous artifacts. Their reversibility levels them by not privileging any, since the invasion and permeation of texts is indefinite. Following the principle of using critical texts as a tool to the elucidation of fictional texts, Campos' own satellite discourse of criticism has become, in the hands of some critics, a means

to some odd sort of comfort. Such discourse has been used as a mere aid in the textual exegesis further elaborated extra-textually in her essays (depending on the logical and temporal priority one ascribes to this phenomenon).

Conveniently applied to the elucidation of Sabina, La Imagen en el Espejo (1965) "explains" Sabina's obsession with the creation of a text that reflects its creator at the very moment in which the act of creation takes place. In this reading, the sea is consistently read as a metaphoric mirror, but photography—perhaps the most specular device for arresting reality—is rejected precisely because the medium is incapable of posing the photographer in the image. Another staple in Campos' image repertoire, the allusion to the city of Venice, can be justified by its power to evoke a rich cultural past (1971, 58). Campos suggests that as referent, Venice behaves like any other word rich in connotations, with the power to transfer a certain depth of information. Recently, she has made an even more explicit connection between cities and texts. Both, she said, make order out of chaos, and Venice does this in an especially beautiful way (Heroísmo Secreto 105-107). The aim of all these analyses is the stabilization of meaning through mastery. However, in my view this novel resists such restrictive strategies because it operates under the premise that meaning (like subjectivity) is created rather than conserved. Furthermore, Sabina is a text with supple self-

deconstructive capacity. In other words, it constantly examines the processes of its own productivity by including a profusion of meta-linguistic commentary—judgements of its own plot, character(s), and devices. Those passages seriously blur the relation between outside (framing discourse) and inside (discourse framed). When they appear within, the authority of those passages is questionable because they can always be read as a part, rather than a description, of the work.

Campos maintains throughout a crucially ambiguous relationship with various literary figures who have textual authority. I will call this ambiguity "parody," divested of its eighteenth century connotation of wit and ridicule. The parodic ambiguity lies in the fact that Sabina strives for the recreation of a vision but with a definite political goal; Sabina manages as much to "install" and "reinforce" as to "undermine" and "subvert" (Hutcheon 1) notions of textual authority. Like Isabel Allende, who imitated García Márquez in La casa de los espíritus (Bassnett 251), Campos parodies Borges and others. Borges is a deliberate choice. As the renowned Latin-American male precursor with encyclopedic knowledge and technical mastery, Borges is an appropriate target. Calinescu maintains that parody only thinly veils its admiration of the work(s) it sets out to scorn. Moreover, successful parody—together with the criticism of its target—maintains a degree of semblance to the latter

(141). Borges' "The Garden of the Forking Paths" (1941) offers the blueprint for the elucidation of those passages wherein Sabina evidences the utopian goal of writing a novel made up of all possible themes, characters, and landscapes (69-70). So Campos parodies Borges' infatuation with the concept of infinitude. Displaying his characteristic penchant for endless listings and endless possibilities and anticipating by some thirty years developments in structuralist narratology, in the above-mentioned story Borges analyzes narrative as a system of branchings. At every point in the story, the narrative subject is faced with a bifurcation and a decision. Only one of those can be realized at a time; choosing one, (s)he is faced with another branching; choosing again, (s)he is faced with another and another. In this manner, (s)he traces the way through a tree-like proliferation—or, to use Borges' own image, the labyrinth—of the story's potential and actualized happenings. Onto this spatial labyrinth a temporal labyrinth must of necessity be grafted because potential and actualized happenings could never materialize simultaneously in a world in which time is unilinear.

Campos' parodic appropriation of Borges' famous story in Sabina has drawn little critical comment in the articles published to date. Her appropriation (like Calvino's in "The Count of Monte Cristo") goes well beyond experimentation. Through adaptations Sabina maintains a

degree of resemblance to "The Garden of the Forking Paths" with which it interacts dialogically. Rather than remaining simple exercises in textual dexterity, some passages exemplify the way an overdetermined feminine subject gains access to language by recourse to past systems of representation which are masculine. They also illustrate the tension resulting from the need to respect and the need to deny such powerful influences. Other features shared by the two Latin-American works are: doubling as a self-reflexive metaphor for the text itself; the color motifs yellow and black; blurred beginnings and endings; the importance of clues to the recovery of "meaning"; the proliferation of languages; and the violence at the center. Campos' accomplishment contests humanist assumptions about originality and uniqueness. It is unlike that of the Renaissance and neo-classical Europeans who followed the pattern of "good imitation." Those precepts included appropriation of a prior authoritative discourse (superior by its anteriority and authenticity) and transformation of the original text by the imprint of the adapter's hand. Rather, it is a philological quest for a mythology of origins. In an age when claims to originality and notions of ownership have been invalidated, the hollow left at the center of authority is replaced by the push of discursive structures that try to dominate. Though Campos refrains in most cases from direct citation of male writers, she

maintains a subtle dialogue with Borges. A statement like "Writers have good memory"/"Los escritores tienen buena memoria" (133) surfaces one of Borges' famous characters, "Funes the Memorious." Funes does not just remember prodigiously; he is capable of the mental prowess that allows the experiences of a lifetime to be "global[ly] recall[ed] by memory" ("Bonнеfoу" 166). Indeed not only writers but readers need his boundless capacity to remember! All those euphemisms (source, influence, imitation, parody, pastiche, collage, intertextuality) with which the critical idiom of our day has managed to endow the post-modern trend to plagiarize with positive connotations (Marilyn Randall 535) demand a prodigious capacity to remember other texts. In Sabina, there are those italicized, loose echoes, without proper acknowledgement, whose recognition depends on the bilateral erudition of her text and her audience. Stein's "A Rose is a rose is a rose" (62) and Eliot's "Dejemos que las mujeres hablen de Miguel Angel" are just two of the echoes. Campos demands extra-ordinary involvement, one that will never allow the reader to "master" this text. At best, one can hope to reach a state of mutual co-operation with it.

Campos' use of "originals" is highly parodic. She is aware of the historicity of language, of the fact that it has been inherited from generations of other users. In her essay on de Beauvoir, Campos asserts the existence of a

"collective memory," handed down through writing, from generation to generation (123). No matter how hard she researches, topics invariably bear the indelible imprint of previous users. Language comes down to her imbedded in discourses that severely limit its malleability. Granted, her case is no different from that of Ferré, or Woolf, or Borges himself. What makes this text special is its explicit awareness of this characteristic, made the sharper by the international scope of a text which spans at least four traditions and languages (French, British, Anglo-American, and Spanish-American). In a paradigmatic scene of reading, one of Campos' heteronomous narrators consults a reference and finds the entry "sea" already rendered in multiple stock metaphors. Among others, the sea as metaphor is:

espejo del hombre libre (Baudelaire)
 . . . cómplice de la inquietud humana
 (Joseph Conrad); nuestra potente madre
 (Joyce-Buck Mulligan); triste mar
 (Victor Hugo) . . . no tiene corazón
 (Henry Miller); inconsolable . . . atroz
 (César Vallejo) . . . desolado, nocturno
 mar (Xavier Villaurrutia) . . . el mar
 nos tienta (Antonio Machado).

a mirror of free man (Baudelaire) . . .
 an accomplice of human uneasiness
 (Joseph Conrad) . . . our powerful
 mother figure (Joyce-Buck Mulligan); sad
 (Victor Hugo) . . . heartless (Henry
 Miller); inconsolable (César Vallejo)
 . . . desolate night sea (Xavier
 Villaurrutia) . . . a source of
 temptation (Antonio Machado). (168-9)

Those quoted are conspicuously male. The omission of Woolf, in whose fiction the sea is ubiquitous, is quite significant for any avid reader of the British novelist. So this proliferation of narrators writes Woolf into the tradition by inscribing her novels in Sabina. Failure to find "untainted" topics within the international literary archives prompts the escapist sections on photography. If a topic eludes her because it is already exhausted, she may replace the text with image-text. Though the image is not reality, it is at least its perfect analogon (Barthes 17), one which dodges the contextual implications of other users. Once again, the appearance of the camera raises a number of oppositions: flatness v. depth, stasis v. movement, qualities caught v. qualities missed. But the alternative is contemplated briefly and, like so many others, abandoned. Thus, Campos finds that the preemption of language curbs authorial intention. She insists that a woman can never fully say what she means because "meaning" is already determined by the discursive embeddedness of language.

As a female writer, she does not consider the embeddedness, which would force her to say more than she intends, liberating because the built-in meaning bears the imprint of the male. As one of those statements detached from the rest assert, "A woman writer is not a male writer" (43). Campos concurs with Irigaray that for a woman one answer is "mimetism," an acting out or role-playing within

the text which allows a woman writer to know/expose what it is she mimics. Because there is no "outside of" discourse, the process of its unravelling is, for a woman,

to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced by it. It means to resubmit herself—inasmuch as she is on the side of the "perceptible," of "matter"—to "ideas," in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but in order to make "visible" by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It also means to "unveil" the fact that if women are such good mimics it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. They also remain elsewhere. (76) (emphasis by the author)

Therefore, Campos recontextualizes Borges. She places herself "within" the tradition which holds him as an exemplary writer and, as such, responsible for canonizing certain assumptions about representations. Then she crystallizes a shift away from those assumptions which serve him well but are detrimental to her as a woman writer.³ One of those concepts is the "Death of the Author," fictionalized in his famous parable "Borges and I," which illuminates a posture started by certain nineteenth-century writers like Nietzsche. This posture was already current in The Dehumanization of Art, in which Ortega y Gasset said that "the poet begins where man ends." With Mallarmé in mind, he declared that the fate of the "poor face of the man who officiates as poet" is to "disappear, to vanish and

become a pure nameless voice breathing into the air the words—those true protagonists of the lyrical pursuit. This pure and nameless voice, the mere acoustic carrier of the verse, is the voice of the poet who has learned to extricate himself from the surrounding man" (Ortega y Gasset 31-32). Today, however, it is more closely associated with the theoretical tactics of French theorists like Foucault, Barthes, and Derrida. In spite of their differences, all of them have questioned the notion of a unified and self-contained subject, conceived by humanism under a veneer of culture and ideology. To Barthes' assertion that authors do not originate like God, ex nihilo, Foucault added the equally vexing statement that the author-function is not a subjective presence, but a mere signature through which "the author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse" (107). The concept of an "expired" author is contrary to Campos' expressed intention of creating a text that reflects its creator at the very moment in which creation takes place. The defunct author is useless as an agent for change. So, to Borges' lingering ghost-of-a-man-eclipsed-by-the-writer, Campos counters her own cameo (albeit palinodic) appearance: "Julieta Campos is and is not me" (143). She finally resolves this critical aporia by suggesting that not just anyone can construct Sabina even if it is composed of bits and scraps of previously owned discourse.⁴

So Sabina pits Borges against Woolf as models of textual authority (62). The assertion that Borges does not like Woolf is not hard to explain. But the "explanation" is not delivered by this text. The reader needs to intervene actively to make sense of it; (s)he needs to be sufficiently informed to speculate on this vexing assertion. Its cryptic, puzzling, nature is exactly in keeping with the mode of a text in which "meaning" appears briefly—sometimes in hysteron proteron fashion—only to slip and fall. In Sabina, linear extrapolations are sensed nearly always as setups; meaning is partial because it occurs in medias res. Meaning is always "made out of the interaction of the addressee and the text in perception as much as interpretation" (Hutcheon 138). At an intertextual level, the assertion is justified since Borges lambasts novelists and critics who uphold the tenets of the "psychological" novel, Woolf's specialty. Such a form, he states in the preface to The Invention of Morel, "would have us forget that it is a verbal artifice" (5-6). At opposite ends of the spectrum from the psychological novel is detective fiction. Borges once explained that this genre appealed to him because it afforded "the classic virtues of a beginning, a middle, and an end—of something planned and executed" (Prentice Hall Literature 1,226). He also valued the surprise ending typical of this kind of writing. At issue in the unusual opening and closing of Sabina are these

convention per se. Consider the blunt demystification of the "illusion" of a beginning with which the book opens: "I am not here. I am on another shore, twenty-two years ago" (3). As far as the ending is concerned, Sabina seems to prod Borges with the "circular" ending discussed by Albert in reference to Tsiu Peu's novel and also with the "surprise" ending praised by Borges himself in the conventional detective story. Campos does not rebut Borges' assertion that psychological writing is "shapeless," but she creates a work of fiction that sits comfortably alongside its self-reflexivity, never belying that it is verbal artifice. She avers that the interior monologue,

That formless magma in which impressions, recollections, emotions, fantasies come together with so-called incongruity is a device, an artifice, in exactly the same way that a discourse shaped with the greatest coherence to reproduce interior discourse would be an artifice.

But more specifically she rebuts with a vengeance Borges' implication that any one genre is less of a convention than any other because,

Every attempt at literary formulation of the adventures of the conscious mind is by its nature an artifice; as is the fact that any expression of reality through words is a fiction. (79)

Finally, the assertion that Borges does not like Woolf can also be explained by the fact that Borges' post-modern denial of individual agency opposes the relational, socially-developed self exemplified in the work of the British writer, which is closer to that in Sabina. Campos

challenges the concept of the death of the author in her fiction. A number of critics—but not all—have reinforced her challenge because such a premise is a serious threat to feminist theory. A firm feminist social agenda demands a theory of agency. Nancy Miller saw the advantages of debunking a concept that enhanced the mystification of canonized authorship. At the same time, she saw that the theory of a defunct author does not apply to women who (collectively) have not been "alive" for that long in the production of discourse (de Lauretis 111).

In more recent publications the need for a revised concept of authorship continues to be strongly argued. In her study of women's poetry, Cheryl Walker categorically opposes author erasure, favoring abstract indeterminacy. She finds a felicitous compromise in the controversy over the death of the author cult. She retains the author-function as an entity whose existence is possible only in and through writing, always recognizing the author as historical agent (570-71). In her studies of fiction, Patricia Waugh has suggested that the work of male modernists embodies relatively traditional notions of the essential self while post-modernists are centrally concerned with deconstructing those notions. Waugh, like Walker, invokes the examples set by women and other marginal groups. In such cases, it is sensible to ask who is representing, what is being represented, and with what sets of concerns.

In other words, she insists on historicizing the studies of women and other "outsider" groups. Waugh argues that

Much of women's writing can, in fact, be seen not as an attempt to define an isolated individual but to discover a collective concept of subjectivity which foregrounds the construction of identity in relationship. (10) (emphasis is the author's)

Just as strongly as Sabina draws from Borges, it recalls themes from Woolf's The Waves and To the Lighthouse. The most obvious are the seascape, the holiday, and the descriptions thereof; the de-emphasis of heavy conventional plot, outward occurrence and character; and the fragmented, obsessively repetitive nature of the narrative. Integral to the plot of all three, the sea is in dynamic relation with the mainland. The two are poles across which oscillate two alternating currents, whipping back and forth: fluidity and constraint. Also, the sea harbors in itself another bipolar set of values: life and death (71). Counterpointed to the rhythmic rolling of the water, representing a life-affirming movement, is a darker movement, the undertow, that makes the sea a harbinger of death. In The Waves, the corrosion of life is inscribed in the images of decay: "rotten apples" (202); "gusts of dead smells;" "matter oozing" (63); in Sabina, in the references to destruction and insidious illnesses: cancer, cholera, pneumonia, and madness. Finally, in neither of these works is time a fixed entity. What Campos says of Woolf's use of time as flux is also true

of her own. The flow that the two try to capture paradoxically contains both the essence of life and the seed of death ("El universo artístico de Virginia Woolf" 21). Campos' experiment with time is, in its compression, close to that of Woolf in Between the Acts. Woolf not only compacts the action of this novel in a single afternoon, but she also brings the weight of literary pressure, spanning six centuries, to bear on the experience of a few hours of a June day in 1939. Likewise, Campos expands one single moment and over its duration she concentrates informative examples of the weight of patriarchal authority in no fewer than four literary traditions. Both experiments succeed in creating a heightened sense of pressure, over-powering when applied over such a brief span of time. Even the formal properties of the two texts reveal unconventional concerns. In Woolf's novel, there are no chapter headings, only large blank spaces intervene between the acts; in Sabina; on the other hand, an elongated paragraph mimics the suspension of time in one uninterrupted moment.

What is more important is that Woolf insists that the relational, socially-defined self must be perceived as specifically feminine, which is compatible with Campos' stand.⁵ At least two critics have consistently read Woolf this way. Using Chodorow's psychoanalytical study, Patricia Waugh has argued that Woolf's model of female subjectivity is informed by relatedness with the objects that surround

it. This connectedness arises from the special nature of the infant's relationship with the (m)other (the diacritical play reminds us that, according to psychoanalysts, the mother is the subject's first Other, the Other in opposition to which the self is constituted). The infant perceives its inherent drive—away from symbiosis towards separation—as culpability and betrayal. This conflict is particularly common in the mother/daughter relationship. In turn, it sets a precedent long past infancy for the daughter's relationship with other adults; it carries over into adult relations especially with other women. As a result, feminine subjectivity is open, dispersed; its ego boundaries are so relaxed that they expand to merge with what is outside. Mrs. Ramsay is a good example of the process of becoming one with the world (106). When, after a hectic day, she retires to be alone—with some knitting or sewing still to do—she watches the three strokes of the lighthouse until she and the light become one:

The long steady stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke . . . she became the thing she looked at—that light for example. (73)

Jean Wyatt has used Woolf elsewhere to illustrate a similar point. Because of the identification between mother and daughter, "women are more comfortable vaulting over ego boundaries to fuse with what is outside than are men, because what Freud calls the 'oceanic feeling' is built into

their primary definition of self" (119). This view is compatible with Campos'. In Sabina, the narrator is as absorbed in the marine surroundings as is Mrs. Dalloway, and she also becomes one with a light:

Unos minutos más y dejaré de ver esa luz que me aturde, para ser esa luz, para volverme incandescente. (50)

A few minutes more and I will cease to see that light which dazes me in order to become that light, to turn incandescent. (34)

Later, the narrator is invaded by an urge to incorporate herself with other beloved surroundings. The interesting play of reflexives in the Spanish original emphasizes the shifting nature of subject and object identities. Personal identity surrenders to a blissful fusion with nature, a fusion which poses no threat:

Se ondula y murmura el mar . . . Imagina la libertad, la apertura, el vuelo. Se imagina a sí misma como objeto obsesivamente acariciado por su mirada. Se imagina mirada por el mar . . . Se imagina el mar. Me imagino, a mí misma, el mar. (85)

The sea undulates and murmurs . . . She imagines freedom, openness, and flight. One imagines oneself an object obsessively caressed by its gaze, looked at by the sea . . . One imagines oneself the sea. I, myself, the sea.

Earlier, she had said:

Yo, el mirador y el promontorio somos una sola cosa. (40)

The balcony, the promontory, and I are a single entity. (26)

In both writers, the oceanic flux seems to be an especially suitable landscape to mirror the expansion of the

self. More conspicuous still are the narrator's shifts between the self and the characters she is creating. They are so indistinguishable that they are joined like "Siamese twins;" their identities are almost "incestuous" (82). This passage supports the belief in an empathic identification that binds a female author to the character(s) of her creation—another important outgrowth of female relational subjectivity. Judith Gardiner asserts that a woman writer is involved in a subtle process of personal envisioning in which she appears to test and to define her own identity through the creative possibilities afforded by her characters (187).

But it seems to me that the dispersion of the self has to be counterbalanced by moments of "assemblage" of its scattered parts. Otherwise, acute dispersion will render the self a non-entity. Moreover, this dispersion could provide strong theoretical backing for the conventional belief in women's proneness to the self-abnegation that leads to self-destruction. Both Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay sway between moments of fission and of reconstruction of the self. Sabina's narrator(s) do not. In this sense, too, Campos carries Woolf's model to extremes. Not only is there an overflow of the I into a profusion of I's, of the narrator into the characters and into the reader, but also there is a dispersion mirrored in the flow of words, never reaching a climatic end, toward which it might seem to be

moving. While Kermode's "sense of an ending" endows the events that precede narrative closure with shape and meaning, Campos creates a "sense of unending." Consider for instance, the narrator's nonchalance when she calls the act of watching the sea through a vast window (practically the only "event" in the novel) an "act of no consequence whatsoever" (139). Ultimately, one need not do more than read the last sentence of the book—"Pero éste no es el fin, sino el principio" (179)/"Although this is not the end, but the beginning" (135)—to find the sweeping palinodic counter-statement with which the book is, with verbal sleight of hand, hopelessly negated. That strange way of putting a final stop, in salutary compliance with convention, subverts the ubiquity of death often encountered in Sabina.

Woolf is representative of Teresa de Lauretis' theorization of subjectivity as an experiential construct. I cite de Lauretis because to the pre-eminence of experience, she adds the importance of language and of self-analyzing practices. This last component is crucial to Sabina's stubborn engagement in the mere process of, not the progress towards, becoming—a process mirrored in the narrative's refusal to end. For de Lauretis in Alice Doesn't (1984), the relation between the cultural notion of woman and real historical women is an experiential process, the process of semiosis: "[Subjectivity] is produced not by

external ideas, values, or material causes, but by one's personal, subjective engagement in the practices, discourses, and institutions that lend significance (value, meaning, and affect) to the events of the world" (159). Such a model is nonteleological. Its subjectivity is constituted on an ongoing basis; it is not the result of intractable psychological traits. It is always open to disruption and reconstitution. Such a model is compatible with the dynamic concept of subjectivity proposed by Bakhtin: "As long as a person is alive he lives by the fact that he is not yet finalized, that he has not yet uttered his ultimate voice" (Problems 59). Following these models, speaking, reading and writing turn Sabina literally into "work-in-progress" (153), a novel/event aiming at a completion always deferred. The deferment explains the narrator's puzzlement as to which verb tense to use in the writing of this novel and her fleeting desire to write in the future tense (27).

But future and past are both discarded for Sabina is categorically produced in the present progressive of discourse where time seems to be suspended and events are just in the process of happening (Imagen 79). In 1987, de Lauretis pointed to the "elsewhere" of current discourse's re-construction of subjectivity as the site for a different construction of gender:

For that "elsewhere" is not some mythic distant past or some utopian future

history: it is the elsewhere of discourse here and now, the blind spots, or the space-off, of its representations. I think of it as spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparatus. And it is there that the terms of a different construction of gender can be posed. . . . (Technologies of Gender 25)

The here and now is essential to Sabina because, as Campos maintains in Imagen, the present is all that matters (79). Meaning is in the process of being formed; textual authority is caught in the act of "composing" its own image; and subjectivity is never reified and fixed. Building from de Lauretis' work, Alcoff devises a "concept of positionality" as a constructive strategy for women who face the dilemma of the re-construction of gendered identity. Identity politics, using identification of self as a particular point of departure for motivation towards change, is followed by orienting the self, not through an essentialist but through a positional relation to the rest of the world. Positionality is fluid since through it the self relates to economic, cultural, and political institutions as well as ideologies. Positionality, Alcoff states, can be utilized as a location for the construction, not the discovery, of meaning (432-433). In Sabina, positionality is explicit in the text's insistence on location, always at an elevated, open vantage point. Location determines sight as a metaphor for knowledge:

perspective, point of view, field of vision, and power of communication. The proliferation of onlookers—among whom are a male narrator inside a room called the Labyrinth, a female narrator in El Mirador and a woman holding a camera—suggests that the point from which one relates to a constantly shifting context must shift and is also a question of choice, no matter how limited. The camera is not out of place in this felicitous linking of the visual with the textual. Like literature, photography harbors a paradox. It seems to record reality transparently; yet the subject-framing eye of the photographer, from the time of Benjamin at least, annuls the objectivity of the camera's eye. A human mind filters reality in both; a human hand propels the pen as much as it triggers the shutter.

As a result, the situation in which Sabina's narrator(s) find themselves is denoted by the relative position they adopt in reference to an existing network of relations which is, in their case, a predominantly (but not exclusively) textual past. These narrators do not find themselves tied to the reductivism inherent in an essentialist position. Nor is their situation negative. The concepts of origin, end, and continuity are replaced by the categories of difference, discontinuity, openness, adaptability and freedom. The narrator(s) positional adaptability is strengthened by the models of narrative, of history, of subjectivity espoused. The absence of a pre-

determined telos guarantees the preservation of human agency. Human agency can and will alter historical outcomes. It will not miraculously alter facts, but it will affect the process of interpreting them. Illumined by the past, each narrator/reader is capable of making an interpretation in the present. And, once wrested out of its continuum, history is open to new reorderings by the readers of the future. Like Benjamin with historical events, Campos proposes to arrest the moment, liberate it from the past, suspend it in a moment of becoming, and deliver it to the present. If in Sabina, she could succeed in interrupting the flow of time (as a photograph can), we would witness the static element that Adorno noted in Benjamin: "To understand Benjamin properly one must feel behind his every sentence, the conversion of extreme agitation into something static, indeed, the static notion of movement itself" (Hannah Arendt 12). Barthes profitably spelled out the connection between photography and history. In Camera Lucida, he explained that photography carries its referent within itself even if that referent is positioned in front of the lens only once (76). In other words, photography ratifies the past but devoid of its historicity.

I believe Sabina's affirmation lies in a very similar process. It does not endorse a de-historicizing of the past. Rather, like a photo, it proposes to plumb into the depths of the past, not to preserve it the way it was but to

break clear from it. If this sounds paradoxical it is, but this is the means by which the past can be both preserved and cancelled at the same time. In descriptive language, Campos bears the burden of a Caribbean preempted by the lingering echoes of precursors. The narrator(s) are sufficiently well-read in male renditions to confirm that. Like Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd, Sabina says, again and again, "I have the feelings of a woman but I have only the language of men" (as quoted from Hardy by Woolf in "Men and Women" 67). This statement expresses what could potentially have been a very real impasse. But the narrators do not become tongue-tied, nor give the Caribbean up. In order to break the impasse, they plunder female archives in search of other models, they inscribe the deleted—Woolf—in whom marine renditions are conspicuously present. So their responses add themselves to the existing layer upon layer of interpretations. They establish a dialogue with the preempted literary past; they subvert objectionable conventions installed by the past; otherwise, they let them stand. To the troubling question "Do you dare describe the Caribbean after Carpentier?" they are now equipped to respond:

No me atrevería. No lo intentaría siquiera. Yo tendría que describirlo, desgraciadamente, como se describe un estado de ánimo.

I would not dare. I would not even try. I would have to describe it, unfortunately, as a state of mind (my translation).

The suggestion throughout is that writing (reading) as a woman involves re-visiting, re-writing, and revising:

Como sucede con la pintura y con la música: para desdibujar hay que saber dibujar; para ser Prokofiev hay que componer una Sinfonía Clásica.
(39)

As it happens with painting and with music: in order to mock depiction, one must know how to depict; in order to be Prokofiev, one must have composed a Classical Symphony.

Foucault made an assertion on the issue of freedom which may be easily applied here. In discussing architecture, he maintained that no system or approach is in itself, functionally, "liberating" or "oppressive." "Liberty is a practice," he wrote, guaranteed only in its exercise (Foucault Reader 245). Therefore, resistance to an oppressive past is not an automatic guarantee carried over into emerging systems. Freedom is a process never closed to generalizations or predictions done a priori.

Notes

1. Carpentier's notion of "origins" is suggestive. It also thematizes the idea of infinite regress into textuality. In the preface to The Kingdom of this World (1949), he set up a manifesto of the "marvelous American real," which later evolved into Latin-American "magic realism." Carpentier was clearly trying to boost the vitality of Latin-American novelists, who had collectively failed during their struggle towards independence. Thereby, with new-found optimism, he conceived of the Caribbean as a new cradle of civilization much as the Mediterranean once was through its felicitous intermingling of different peoples. The "seed" is a reference to his "Viaje a la Semilla," published in 1944. It is the story of an old man and his journey backwards in time to his childhood, whereby he might save his house from impending demolition and his misfortune from time. In this prodigious account, clocks are visualized spinning counter-clockwise; man returning to immaturity; furniture growing, as man/child proportionately diminishes in size. Time and space are both submitted to a powerful sucking motion that drags down years and walls and reduces trees to bare roots and seeds. The story thematizes the romantic possibility of "returns" to a lost paradise. Applied to language, this theme refers to the conceivability of working one's way back through opinions and thoughts to the (naked) words that engendered them and, beyond that, to a concept whose essence has not yet been caught in the network of discourse.

2. As Patricia Waugh perceptively maintains, this passage supports a modernist (Bergsonian conceptualization of time and identity; post-impressionist aesthetics) as well as a post-modernist reading (illusory wholeness of the subject).

3. Another way to describe this process of recontextualization is to apply Gilbert and Gubar's theory of the palimpsest. In The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) they have asserted that women writers have managed to achieve true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. Therefore, their works conceal — but do not obliterate — their less socially acceptable levels of meaning (73).

4. An article like "Julieta Campos o la interiorización de lo cubano" obviously confirms this assertion. In this article, Martha Martínez argues that, unfairly neglected as a Cuban writer because of her disregard of the Revolution, Campos makes her authorial presence felt in those fragments of Cuba which appear everywhere in her fiction (793-797).
5. Unlike Ferré's, Campos' reading of Woolf is closer to that of Toril Moi, who argues that the British stylist presents the individual as a product of a network of ideological, material, and psychological forces (1-18).

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL DETOURS: FROM SYLVIA MOLLOY'S CERTIFICATE OF ABSENCE TO WOOLF'S BETWEEN THE ACTS

. . . son tres las superficies
sobre las que escribo: la página,
el cuerpo y la historia.

Aurea María Sotomayor

In 1985, Alice Jardine conceived of the category
"woman" as a new rhetorical space:

"She" is created from the close
explorations of semantic chains whose
elements have changed textual as well as
conceptual positions, at least in terms
of valorization: from time to space,
the same to other, paranoia to hysteria,
city to labyrinth, mastery to non-
mastery, truth to fiction. (38)

Nothing could describe more appropriately the emerging
"she," the main character of Molloy's En Breve Cárcel
(1981), translated as Certificate of Absence (1989). This
is the story of a lesbian love triangle. Its ups and downs
are intimately related to the ordeal of penning a story in
which the subject who writes while travelling a labyrinthian
landscape is the object discussed. Lines from "Retrato de
Lisi que Traía en una Sortija" by Francisco Quevedo (1580-
1645) inspired the title. They serve as the first epigraph
of the Spanish novel:

En breve cárcel traigo aprisionado,
 Con toda su familia de oro ardiente,
 El cerco de la luz resplandeciente,
 Y grande imperio del amor cerrado;

but are dropped from the English translation with a substitution from Emily Dickinson.¹ Following the logic of "phallic" discourse, Quevedo's persona claims to seal hermetically—to unify, to trap, and to enclose—in verse—as "true" an image of the beloved as the one in the ring-locket of the sonnet's title. But the message of these lines is negated so to speak, by the palinode (a figure of speech which installs the theme of inversion early) hinted at by the second epigraph, retained in both works:

Alone, unseen; seeing all so still down
 there, all so lovely. None seeing, none
 caring. The eyes of others our prisons;
 their thoughts our cages.

This fragment fittingly aligns this work with the theme of openness of Virginia Woolf's "An Unwritten Novel." The components shared by the two works are: the motif of the trip, a vague destination, life as test, and writing as inconclusive and voyeuristic. Woolf's short-story involves appropriately an enigma, a woman—a fellow traveller—sitting opposite the narrator on a train, unconsciously luring her to decipher a secret. The deferring of the revelation of that secret, always postponed, inspires the play of the narrator's imagination and the text. The enactment is the result of a fanciful narrator's letting her imagination run freely as she mentally responds to the

"enigma" of the woman on the train. In attempting to disclose the enigma she sets out to uncover, she reveals herself (Baldwin 22).

Likewise in Molloy's novel, an Argentine woman travels back to take up residence in a rented New England room, where she had once pursued a love affair with a woman called Vera and where she now "sojourns." This time she intends to narrate that love affair, now ended, in a memoir while she waits for her present lover, Renata (in vain, as it turns out. The lover stands her up). Filled with a strong sense of dejá vu, she scripts her text which almost duplicates the real-life situation with Renata. The narrator's restlessness grows as she writes, her uneasiness intensified by two factors. First, Vera and Renata had also once been lovers. Second, the process of writing overlays reality; it does not "fix" it transparently as if a mimetic relationship between experience and writing could be assumed. This statement brings us back to the two epigraphs which stand in oxymoronic relation. Unlike Quevedo's poetic persona, Woolf's metaphorical and Molloy's literal narrators long hopelessly for a way of representation that can escape the duplicity of language.

It is not merely coincidental that En Breve Cárcel focuses on issues related to her personal and scholarly interests. Unlike Ferré and Campos—both prolific as fiction writers—Molloy is better known as a critic of

stature. Tri-lingual herself, she is the product of a bicultural marriage between a French mother and a British father. In an interview Molloy commented on the confusion of identity this background brought her. Because at home English was spoken predominantly, she describes her early infatuation with French as a way of minimizing the English side of her family and of saluting. . . "[her mother's side] or making her more important." In the struggle between languages implied here, French felt "marginal" (García Pinto 127). So for years Molloy plunged herself in the Alliance Française in Buenos Aires and later left there with a scholarship to La Sorbonne, where she eventually completed a doctorate. The true beginning of her critical career was a book entitled Las Letras de Borges (1972), a text whose critical value is equalled by the interest springing from its editorial history. Published originally in Spanish, Molloy's text on Borges has been recently "translated" into English and "adapted" by Molloy in collaboration with Oscar Montero (the two terms are explicitly used in the cover of the 1994 English version). The process thereby described reverses customary practices in which translators are unnamed, their work unrecognized. The process highlights the art of translation and its status as a product with its own integrity—neither the original Spanish text transformed intact into English nor a work written originally in English.

During the twenty-odd years intervening between the publications of both texts, Molloy has written innumerable articles—mostly in English and Spanish—while she has been teaching at various universities. En Breve Cárcel is the only work of fiction written by Molloy to date. At least two self-referential gestures can be traced in the novel. First, the narrator's concern with the problems of translation evokes Molloy's undertaking in Women's Writing in Latin America (1991), an anthology she co-edited, which has made previously untranslated work by women available to the Anglo world. Second and more conspicuously, Molloy undertakes autobiography, a genre which has truly captivated this prolific Argentine scholar. The novel features a narrator who strives to "outline the [elusive] boundaries of her own [story]" (49) and who comments as much as Molloy herself in At Face Value on the complexities of self-representation. Both are aware of the tricks that this genre plays even on its staunchest practitioners, so the narrator tells her story from an odd point of view—a third-person singular (which marks the text as fictional) with infrequent slippage into the first (which preserves a biographical slant).

Molloy's findings in the critical text confirm that self-consciously theoretical contemporary critics have so problematized the subject in manifold ways that the proposed self is almost always obstructed. In the novel, a similar

skepticism makes Molloy invest her character with a divided subjectivity and divest her of a proper name in a way that seems to pre-empt the possibility of an integrated identity. In At Face Value, Molloy dismisses the naive speculation that whoever writes his/her own story is by reason of intervention glibly guaranteeing its essential truth. The fact is that even if (s)he tries, it will be impossible to tell exactly and objectively what the truth is.

Early in 1984, she was, in all likelihood, rehearsing the central idea of this book. At that time, she called the process through which writers (to greater or lesser degrees) relate the textualization of themselves to themselves a "seasoning," from the Spanish "aderezar" (La Sartén 58-59). Now she convincingly argues that all the nineteenth century and early twentieth-century writers she discusses are deliberately preoccupied with carving for themselves personae in accordance with specific agendas—political (Vasconcelos), ideological (Sarmiento), national (Carré), and/or personal (Ocampo, Langhe). These personae are clearly intended to launch the writers into national recognition. Therefore, the pre-texts they quote from, the models they invoke, the figures with which they identify are all part of an editing process, based on events stored in memory, that helps them contrive an articulation of themselves.

In Certificate of Absence, the complex boundaries between "writer" and "work" or between the twin materialities of a writer's body and a writer's corpus, if you will, are mapped out through the conceit of the body. The conceit is even more significant when one recalls that the Latin "corpus" is the etymological root shared by the Spanish cuerpo as in the human body (cuerpo humano) and in the body of writing (cuerpo literario). Carnality, central to the female experience (Gubar 251) and crucial to the lesbian (Stimpson 97), figures very prominently. In this text, the nameless narrator is so deeply involved in her story that there is literally no distance between her life and her art. Both aspects are conjoined in metaphors that carefully yoke carnality with textuality. For instance, the narrator leaves a "thread" (5) trailing behind her; she is uncertain whether to associate fertility with reproduction ("in her own body," 78) or with textual production ("in what she writes," 57). When the story eludes her, it is because "ella carece de papel fijo" (66); literally, "she has no fixed role" (47).

The English version reveals this text's active resistance to translation, proving Walter Benjamin right in his assertion that the original always keeps an "untouchable" kernel that no translation can reach (quoted in The Ear of the Other 114). The English term "role" drastically curtails the word play on the Spanish "papel,"

literally meaning both (1) a sheet of paper, blank or printed, and (2) "role," the representation of a character in drama. In Spanish the two meanings serve as resources of undecidability whereas in the English they are held solidly in check by requiring the translator to anchor meaning through the choice of one denotation over the other. One critical link between writing and sexuality seems to be the hand as metonym for the body and as the instrument of writing. So, hands proliferate: they find the lover and caress; they hold the pen and write.

Even though one trope is unfortunately lost in this instance of translation, the purpose of conflating the sexual with the textual throughout is not. The purpose is to disrupt the conventional oppositions, body and mind, desire and writing that presume the first elements to be as inferior to the second. According to Derrida, it suffices to remove the body/desire from the binary that keeps it trapped and inflected negatively—always in a devalued position whenever paired—without its returning as the "now superior" term of the binary. Derrida argues that inversion is in itself an effective stage toward the eventual displacement of the binary itself (Positions 41-42). But here, the binary is subjected to even more forceful treatment. The devalued element, the body, is thoroughly reconstructed (literally broken up, so to speak, to be "put back together") according to a different logic and through a

metaphorical trajectory of self-fashioning with a literal counterpart in the narrator's open-ended journey of discovery.

The plot tends towards the figuration of a homosexual world and the articulation of an erotics of writing consistent with it. Here a superb essay by Elaine Marks, fittingly called "Lesbian Intertextuality," is appropriate because it demonstrates—through a series of readings from Sappho, Leduc and Wittig among others—that the major undertakings of women-identified-texts is "the creation of a new mythology in which the female body is undomesticated" (372). Later, Teresa de Lauretis, reworking Marks' article, more aggressively demands reappropriation of the body's "precoded, conventional representations . . . as domesticated, maternal, oedipally or preoedipally en-gendered." She completes the description of this process with the allusion to its defamiliarizing effect of re-creating the body "other-wise" (167).

For Molloy's narrator, this effect is obvious in the extensive passage from which I quote below:

She is in bed, sick . . . she pronounces her body ill, puts it to bed, wants to take care of it and renew her contact with it . . . she is in fact sick. The thermometer she consults as soon as she goes upstairs gives her scientific confirmation of this remark. She has a fever, a high fever . . . she is afraid of dying. Once in bed she tries to observe this undefined malady objectively . . . she wakes up, empty, thirsty . . . aching more than ever. (77-78)²

De Lauretis' plea for reappropriation is colored by the Lacanian assumption that the body becomes a whole, i.e., a bounded totality, as a result of the controlling effect exercised by the specular image and sustained by a sexually marked body. Possessing a proper name is part of a related logic. It entails endowing the body with morphological distinctness and positioning the possessor of that name within the domain of kinship governed by the law of the father (Butler 146). Conversely, being deprived of a name—which installs gender and kinship—disavows the patronymic lineage and becomes both the occasion for the disintegration of the (paternal) version of bodily integrity and the re-formation of "other" versions of bodily coherence. The body without a name in Molloy's novel is neither wholesome nor whole. Its proper place, as the quotation above shows, is not just any bed but the hospital bed or the operating table. This body is in "pieces;" it defies integration. Dismemberment haunts the narrative in the dream of a woman who plays carelessly with a razor (67), in the severed hands that appear and disappear, and in the partitioning of the body throughout. Intense, too, are the efforts at creating its new contours. Its skin, the outer layer, is often unstable and about to split.

Undoubtedly, there is considerable critical turmoil surrounding the scant scholarship (some twenty articles in all) on Certificate of Absence. In 1989, Amy Kaminsky was

the first to hint at the important debate on gender that this novel launched by accusing and chiding critics who have failed to deal with this novel as an open expression of lesbian desire. She accused Francine Masiello and Magdalena García Pinto of dereliction in not opening—by so obviously not referring to its existence—the "dark closet" of lesbianism in their critical discussion of Molloy's novel (232-233).

Kaminsky denounces those two critics directly while David W. Foster explains that the blanketing silence covering the novel's lesbianism is a result of critical reluctance to address it. Foster correlates their critically gingerly treatment with what is undoubtedly the "desexualized" erotics of the relationship textualized. He suggests that such measured control in both the interpretation of lesbianism and its treatment speaks for itself. It represents a successful attempt at rendering lesbianism as natural and self-evident. In other words, its treatment functions as a caveat against the assumption that heterosexuality constitutes the norm and homosexuality the aberrant. In this manner, Foster's interpretation endows the silence surrounding lesbianism with political purpose. But his reading also exposes the peril of reductivism. Ignoring the lesbian narrative equals rendering it unnamed and invisible. What could be more self-defeating than failure to describe—let alone recover—distinctive forms of

identity that the prevailing sign system neutralizes or obliterates.³ Foster's discussion suggests that if lesbianism is assumed as a given (read: "inconsequential"), then its representation of a different, not "normal," desire is also indiscernible. Foster never shows how, but he suggests that Molloy's novel represents not just an attempt to inscribe a different type of desire, but to do so by invariably questioning "the prison-house of an unreflexive heterosexual discourse" (114).

Masiello has been taken to task rightfully on one aspect of her treatment of Molloy's novel, but to dismiss her article in its entirety would be unfair. One of Masiello's most pregnant interpretations is her commentary on the play between dual and triangular configurations as structural devices. For example, she notes the overall division of the novel into two parts; the first part is comprised of six chapters, the second of nine. The number two is evoked in the dichotomies past/present; interior/exterior; body/soul. The number three, on the other hand, is present in the cities where the action takes place; in the erotic triangle comprised by Renata, Vera, and the narrator; or in the models derived from the classical goddesses and the narrator's own. I find no fault with Masiello's brief theorization of the logocentric function of the number two, either. She comments that such a structure sharply dichotomizes elements and places them in a

relationship of contrast and hierarchy. Conversely, the number three as graphic schema opens up asymmetry between the entities occupying the corners of the triangle (108-9). More pointedly for my purpose, the triangular configurations mirror the Oedipal triangle schematized by Freud: the situation of the young child (notoriously male), who is attempting to place himself in a relation with a feared father and a beloved mother. The situation for the female is found to be mutatis mutandis, more or less the same. Though I will demonstrate that this novel proposes to "undomesticate" the female body, the exchanges among the members of the narrator's nuclear family are still essential to her preparation for the adult social role. The novel, in an effort to transcend gender altogether (especially the type set up in categories of two) rejects the model of the female body engendered oedipally or pre-oedipally, but it still strives to "recreate the body other-wise" ("Sexual Indifference" 167). This process requires evoking the complicated play of desire for and identification with key players in the narrator's early life—sometimes to ban them (as she does the oppositional: father/mother), at other times to identify with them (as she does with aunt Sara who defies oppositional sexual positioning).

My reading aligns with Kaminsky's because it recognizes the lesbian moments without "naturalizing" or euphemizing them. It also partly explains, but not justifies, the

reluctance of critics Francine Masiello and Magdalena García Pinto because it deepens and broadens the range of what is normally defined as lesbian existence. My reading focuses on a definition that—without ruling out the explicitly erotic, albeit controlled, sensuality of lesbianism—includes it also as metaphorical bonding between women. This transgressive textual strategy has Virginia Woolf as an intertextual precedent.⁴ Bonnie Zimmerman cites such lesbian moments in general at the "blurring of boundaries between self and other, subject and object, lover and beloved" (1992, 11). Paradoxically, not all moments involving lesbian exchanges demonstrate the same characteristics. Witness Mrs. Dalloway where lesbianism has an ambivalent position. Du Plessis maintains that within this single novel, the bond between Clarissa and Sally is valorized while the bond between Miss Kilman and Elizabeth is satirized because it is "like heterosexual thralldom, another form of bullying. If lesbianism is a nondominant form of the erotic, Woolf valorizes it; if it is yet another version of power and dominance, she satirizes it" (du Plessis 59). According to Clarissa, Mrs. Kilman's "egotism" is her "undoing" (132). It is self-centeredness that makes her talk about her own suffering (136).

Likewise, in Molloy's text, the relationship between the narrator and her Aunt Sara is pleasurable and reciprocal, while the former's relationship with Vera is a

repressive form of the erotic in which the lovers are "enigmas" to each other (Suleiman 30). The implication of this ambivalence is nowhere clearer than when Vera is seen through the narrator's eyes as a woman well past her prime but incapable of resigning herself to her loss of power because of her dwindled physical attraction. At that time, Vera—as mannish female invert—is likened to "one of those dandies who cannot give up their roles as Don Juans" (70). Neither does the simile assimilate Vera, the "male-identified" butch of lesbian identity, into technical heterosexuality. That masculinity juxtaposed to a culturally intelligible "female body," is internally dissonant and, for theorists like Judith Butler, potentially subversive. This simile challenges the distinction between female lover and the exemplary male philanderer of heterosexualdom, thus suggesting that same-sex love is not intrinsically liberating for it, too, can foster relationships of limitless possessiveness. In Woolf's and Molloy's texts, same-sex liaisons can bring an aftermath of anger and frustrated desire.

It is clear that En Breve Cárcel contains most of the attributes, recently defined, of so-called lesbian symbolism. It makes Harriet Demoine's room of lesbian experience (a metaphor for marginality) into a quite literal one. Molloy's narrator has enclosed herself in a room of her own, where she writes, isolated from the rest of the

world (Sinister Wisdom 29) although she denies needing isolation or a retreat. She also speaks of the feeling of freedom induced by the sight of the sea during her childhood. The room is both refuge and prison. The novel "represents a commitment to skin, blood, breast, and bone" (Stimpson 97). All four of these figure heavily in the book. Skin figures in a negative sense, through its absence and as a source of unremitting discomfort. In general, all the characters are conspicuously "fleshless," as if countering the accepted male literary stereotype of the fleshy female body. Somebody tells the narrator in particular: "Vous n'étiez pas bien dans votre peau" (15). She is born with a broken shoulder (31); she constantly dreams of blood (15; 32; 77; 110).

More important, the past—family, home, and childhood—and the world of dreams bear heavily on the present (Zimmerman 128). They are personal imperatives, loci where bonding is achieved. This narrator is, simultaneously with the present, "revisiting" familiar places and figures from her past as she travels towards an uncertain future. Why does she oscillate, seemingly paradoxically, between acceptance and rejection of that past? Because the concept of "coming out" necessarily demands a movement away from the culture of one's origin—heavy with culture and ancestry—towards the strongly individualistic social formation, outside

heterosexual society, that the lesbian envisions. Thus, when the narrator's father in a dream asks her to go to Ephesus, she neither follows nor disregards his advice. Specifically, she counters his invocation to the Artemis of Ephesus with her own evocation of the goddesses' Roman counterpart, Diana. This oscillation is subsumed in the conceit of keeping/trespassing limits; its signified is trans-gression, in the sense that a trans-gression is a stepping-across of a boundary; to trans-gress is to step across, to go beyond, to cross over.

Vera's passionate coercion of her sexual partners has an implied equivalent in her desire to dominate in textual matters. Because the narrator's relationship with Vera lacks reciprocity of erotic desire and mutual access to pleasure for the partners, its expression is almost always the monologue (74). It seeks to assert, not to erase, the distinction between active and passive partner. She consciously manipulates the details of her narrative and includes selectively what suits her dictatorial purpose. Vera's is a sexuality of domination. She "invades" the narrator (a character in the on-going narrative) in ways that make her feel physically in jeopardy (87). Her affairs are "conquests" (88); likewise, her narratives are meant to seduce, compel, dominate or abandon (33). In narrative matters, Vera's will to master resembles, once again, the phallic aggression of males who,

. . . tell her things, which she interprets, feeling they are asking for help, and she ends up yet once more the recipient of other's stories without telling her own (emphasis is mine).

So the fact that Vera is a woman does not make her inherently sensitive to the narrator's needs.

In the intertextual network, the narrator—through Vera's example—is close to one other Woolfian outcast. Miss La Trobe, a female artist who directs and authors the main event of Between the Acts, the pageant, is as much of a social outcast as Molloy's narrator. La Trobe's background is obscure. The inhabitants of the provincial Pointz Hall speculate about her foreign-sounding name and suspect Russian blood. As a lesbian, she is also a sexual outcast. Rumor has it that "she had been an actress. That had failed. She had bought a four-room cottage and shared it with an actress" (58). As an outsider and a loner, she resembles Molloy's narrator who, with difficulty, authors the narrative of a failed ménage à trois in the claustrophobic seclusion of a rented room.

Like La Trobe, the narrator is stepping on foreign soil. Amy Kaminsky has discussed the extensive geography the novel spans. The use of language reflects this geography. The narrator evidently speaks English with Renata and French with Vera ("Lesbian Cartographies" 108). Yet for all her previous globe-trotting, the narrator is now unequivocally static and self-confined. More conspicuous still among the resemblances are the indications that the

narrator will be perilously close to drawing into a language power-game should she follow Vera's example. Like Miss La Trobe, Vera can, in her worst moments, engulf the narrator in her domination.

This power is rendered metaphorically in Between the Acts in military imagery: "She [La Trobe] had the look of a commander pacing his deck;" later, she shades her eyes "in the attitude proper to an Admiral" (62). Notice how here, too, the text ties female tyrant to the male paradigm as it did when Vera was likened to Don Juan. Even the least pathetic of La Trobe's efforts to bring the "living" actors of her pageant together is outstaged by her insistence on dominating the wind, the rain, the grazing animals, forcing them to comply with her demands. This way La Trobe could render the meaning "hers," fixed and finished, not unlike Quevedo's in the epigraph.

Lest the connection with Woolf's posthumously published novel seem strained, I want to suggest that "An Unwritten Novel" could be replaced by Between the Acts as intertext if one considers that, at the time of Woolf's death, she literally willed that it be an un-written novel. To explain this substitution, I will recall pertinent details as to the circumstances surrounding its composition and publication. Between the Acts must inescapably be read in the context of World War II (the action is set in June 1939). It is apocalyptic because Woolf considered the times ravaged and

civilization doomed. Her disillusionment is well-documented. The novel was written "despite the peril and strain of the battle of Britain," and she survived only a month after its completion" (Heilbrun 247-8). All during its composition, she showed signs of distress which culminated in her instruction to John Lehmann, her associate, to postpone its publication. This way she hoped to allow herself time "to revise it" and "pull it together" (Letter 3709, Vol. VI, 27 March, 1941). The entries in the Writer's Diary are all but confirmation of her heightened anguish at what she thought was the imminent disappearance of an audience against whom her words echoed—the reverberation that made her writing worthwhile (June 9, 1941). The loss of readers complicit with her words was reason enough to end her own life. Finally, the words written in the margin of her second suicide note to Leonard read "Will you destroy all my papers." Though there may be question as to exactly what those papers comprised, there is little doubt that they included the typescript of Between the Acts, a novel Leonard Woolf published after his wife's death, disregarding her explicit statement of willing it unwritten.

The examples of Vera and Miss La Trobe indicate a direct relationship between the abuse of language and the will to dominate by force. As Patricia Klindienst Joplin states, "communication necessarily entails recognition of

the physical and spiritual difference between speaker and listener" (212). Often these characters ignore such recognition; they succumb to the temptation of imposing themselves on their audience. In those instances, they severely jeopardize the concept of meaning as shared. Obviously, the drama of the "actors'" lives directly intervenes and accounts for the disruption and interruption of the flow of both "productions." Life in both texts problematizes literary production. However, it is not until both Vera and Miss La Trobe—and the narrator herself through Vera's example—stop resisting those so-called obstructions, the better to cope with them, that they are able to attain a modicum of success.

In the course of Molloy's novel, such a moment comes late when, love affair with Vera ended, the narrator engages in flirtation followed up by an unusual dialogue with her, a dialogue in which the irritating "asymmetry" of previous conversations is finally altered. At that moment, she is happy to think that language is "living" (100). Miss La Trobe's counterpart moment comes when she welcomes the risk she has run by acting her play with living actors in the open air (181). Only then do they both agree that the risk of bringing meaning into being is justified. Only then is the Other no longer engulfed as an object but preserved as an Other self. It is precisely the joint efforts of diverse

factors— writer/character and playwright/audience—that provide a useful textual strategy.

Continuing with the "undomesticating" process identified by Elaine Marks is "to change the relationship between nature and culture" (372). Nowhere is that relationship more firmly fixed than in the atemporal resonances of myth. Molloy's narrator does not engage in what Alicia Ostriker called "revisionist myth-making," a process through which poets reinterpret female icons with the intent to empower them. The mythopoeia practiced by Ferré in the fables is precisely that. Molloy's narrator, on the other hand, recalls Artemis and Diana as sources of power in themselves because they provide a means of transcending the limitations of gender. Artemis was one of the pan-Hellenic goddesses borrowed by the Romans in the figure of Diana. Ferreira-Pinto has already identified the two goddesses' contrasting attributes. The one evoked in the narrator's dreams is a version of Artemis Plymastus, who appears weighted down by the fullness of her stony, multiple breasts, a part of the anatomy that stands synechdochially for biological femininity and connotes nurturance and vulnerability but which in Artemis signifies sterility. In Molloy's rendition, Artemis is confined to the sanctuary at Ephesus which the narrator's father, in one of her dreams, had commanded her to visit. This dream poses the statue at Ephesus as a paradigm of the patriarchally controlled body.

Artemis' confinement within the barriers of the temple contrasts with Diana's freedom which allows her—the defiant huntress equipped with quiver and silver bow—to roam out-of-the-way forest lands. Unlike Artemis, Diana is mobile, independent, and strong.

But to say that the relationship between Artemis and Diana is one of contrast places it exactly in the binary logic that this novel so intently opposes. All critics to my knowledge have overlooked the goddesses' power as woman-identified deities. Surely, they are not as famously lesbian as Sappho and her disciples or the Amazons, but both are women-identified. It is puzzling that both are associated with fecundity—pregnancy, mitigation of the pain of labor, breast feeding, and chastity—which is made possible only through a heterosexual relationship yet they remain childless themselves. For example, after giving birth to Artemis at Ortygia, in the vicinity of Ephesus, the mortal Leto was pursued to the island of Delos where her first-born miraculously acted as midwife to her twin brother Apollo. Yet Artemis is paradoxically quite involved with Britomartis, a female lover from Crete, with whom she maintains a sexual relationship in the total sense (Bell 72). Diana, on her part, remains virginal though she openly prefers women. As true transgressors, the two goddesses ultimately defy imposed limits. Artemis rejects conventional sexual preference by taking a woman for a

lover; Diana breaks free from the societal role that constrained Artemis to Ephesus and which today aims at locking the narrator within manageable dimensions, including those related to physical space. Artemis/Diana are so strong that they influence those associated with their worship. Atalanta, for instance, shares their virginity, hunting, fierce independence, roving, and familiarity with the woods. Dauntlessly opposed to her father's wish to marry her off, she finally agrees but on condition that she challenge each of her suitors to a foot race. If she won, he would be put to death; if he won, she would marry him. After several young men are outrun by swift-footed Atalanta, Hippomenes borrows the three apples of Hesperides and drops one each time Atalanta overtakes him. Curiosity forces her to slow down. She stops to pick them up, and he wins by a small margin. So Atalanta is won, but only through a ruse.

Two recurring images are part of the mythical network established above. The narrator's link with the moon (122) is an expansion of her association with all three goddesses of the moon, Artemis, Diana, and Britomartis. Less manifest is the reference to hanging:

Two nights ago, when she was drifting off to sleep, she once again imagined a rope hanging from the balcony and dreamed of being hanged upside down, as in a tarot card. (49)

Oscar Montero pertinently traces to Frazer's The Golden Bough the connection between the noose and the cults of Artemis/Diana. In Greece, he writes, Artemis appears to

have been hanged yearly in her sacred grove of Condylea in the Arcadian hills. For this reason, she is also known as the Hanged One. A similar rite took place at Ephesus—the most famous of Artemis' sanctuaries and the one repeatedly alluded to in this narrative—where a woman hanged herself and so stirred the goddess' sympathy that Artemis dressed her in divine garb. She is Hecate, the Distant one (115). More recently, Eva Cantarella has proved death by hanging, which causes the body to swing in the air, to be the oldest and most privileged instrument of female death. She has noted the frequency with which women are bracketed with the brochos—the lethal noose—in ancient Greek as well as Roman texts. The connection between the two, she concedes, is "a constant, consolidated, institutional link" (58). When a woman dangles in empty space, she is cut off, as it were, from earth, the material out of which women are purportedly created. Therefore, severing them from the material with which they are identified becomes the most telling means of symbolically effecting their demise. Even after Greek pre-civic society was superseded by the city-state, death by hanging continued to be considered characteristically female. Cantarella argues that pre-city societies used gender and age as their fundamental classificatory system. Barbara Smith adds fertility to gender as the standards for classification (Larrington 87). But with the advent of the city-state the old male/female was replaced by the new

free/slave dichotomy. The slave like the woman was not a person, but an object governed by different laws. Vestiges of tribal practices were inculcated into the laws and customs of the time. In other words, a "natural" criterion replaced a "cultural" one although, in the eyes of the Greeks, the latter was perceived to be as "natural" as the former. Among the traces of the primitive dichotomy which curiously survived the social reorganization of the Greek city is the carry-over in civic festivals and legal practices of this ritual of female execution by the noose. No longer symbolically, the sign of female nature and of its difference continued to demand for women death by hanging, and it determined not only the manner of their death, but their social and legal status as well (66). Thus, through death by hanging society always put women and slaves in their place, lower than and subservient to the male/citizen. In Molloy's novel, the narrator's dreams obviously place her squarely in the world of classic myth; what is less obvious is that such a world upholds a rigid classification of its members by gender.

In Molloy's text it is interesting to contrast the network of metaphors related to textual production that splices Vera with Aunt Sara. Linking the two, one can see how different these two characters are. Both are raconteuses. But, as has been demonstrated, Vera's stories are "grandiloquent and precise;" they exclude the narrator;

Aunt Sara's, on the other hand, are generous accounts, expansive. Of the narrator's matrilineal family, only Sara is unmarried and as conspicuously childless as her Biblical namesake, the barren wife of Abraham. In other words, she cannot be counted on to re-produce but to produce. She is a "spin-ster" who lives vicariously through the lives of her sister and two nieces. She is a letter-writer and tireless seamstress, one who works with cloth (material). In Spanish, "cloth" can be equally translated as tela and género. The latter term is used in the Argentine colloquialism "Hay tanta tela," meaning "there is so much material to discuss," i.e., material to produce textual material. Denotatively rich, the Spanish term is used to designate equally literary genre (género literario) and sexual gender (género sexual). So Sara's ability with "el género" conflates non-literary with literary production. Tamara Kamenzsain maintains (without alluding to Barthesian notions of the text as "textile" or "web-like") that it is a literary commonplace to link a text metonymically with weaving, the construction of the narrative with the task of stitching, and the manner in which a poem is seasoned by adjectives with the decorative craft of embroidery (Kamenzsain 77)—all tasks conventionally assigned to women. These "new" metaphors are inspired in part by "old" myths: Arachne, Philomela; Ariadne and, the most famous, Penelope. They affirm that female production of the textile kind is

equated with a woman's language, her speech and her story (Hamlet's Mother 120). Aunt Sara, then, is capital among the narrator's ancestral figures because she subtly opposes the ideology of sexual gender. Such an ideology is based on the subordination of women predicated on biological determinism, fateful motherhood, and woman's supposed lack of aggressive feelings, often equated with weakness. Sara generates production in abundance. She produces tales (oral accounts), words (written accounts) in the form of letters (which are personal, intimate, and relational), and garments. The precedent of that proliferation is a useful example for a niece who happens to be an aspiring writer.

Sara is not entirely free from a desire to bind her labor within precise patterns. But even when she strives to contain her production, the result is more production. To illustrate this point I will summarize an anecdote. When Sara cuts the garment, she spreads the patterns, planning the least wasteful use of the material. There is an expression she uses when, pinning pattern to cloth, she finds out she lacks enough material and economizes on unseen portions of the pattern, eliminating the non-essential. She calls that instance the "birthing of a cat" (22) because some extra portion of the garment (a kitten) has to be pushed out (35). This odd metaphor explicitly connects production with reproduction. In addition, the word g  nero has other critical denotations. "Genre" dates from the

nineteenth century (earlier periods had distinguished among "kinds") and derives via French from the Latin genus meaning "class" or "sort," a derivation it shares with gender. In Romance languages, one word covers both; gender is thereby inscribed as fundamental genre. This last observation is relevant to a novel that wishes to nullify the categories of gender. This etymology sustains linking Sara with Diana. In mythology, a field where female figures are viewed "purely in terms of their sexual function and . . . confined in a catch-all category labelled fertility" (Larrington IX), Diana is an exception. Her most noted attribute is that she, as unviolated virgin, remains childless. Lesser known is the fact that, as female-identified deity, she is attracted to other females. Sara is not actively a lesbian like Diana, but like the goddess, she is fertile and nurturing. She lives to act out a maternal role, in ancillary position to her sister's family, dispensing nourishment to her sister's daughters as if they were her own. Yet Sara never fulfills her role as genetrix, a role she is bodily and psychologically well endowed for. So Sara represents a maternity which goes beyond the biological per se.

The narrator also recirculates two familiar associations—female sexuality with narcissism and lesbianism with self-love. Freud defined self-love relating it to the well-known legend of the Greek Narcissus who,

wearied with hunting, seeks to quench his thirst in the waters of a spring. Spellbound by his own reflection, he unwittingly desires it with such urgency that he drowns as he pursues it. But following the overt pattern of recirculating privileged conceptions, narcissism is invoked in this novel only to be banished because the narrator's aim is to constitute the body in a new erotic economy. Early in the novel, the narrator establishes herself as marked by the presence of Clara, her younger sibling, who is the "mirror image" that confronted her every day at bath time. Later, she compares the reaction Renata and she herself have to a set of mirrors placed on the staircase landing of a motel where they once vacationed. Renata never failed to register with ecstasy the reflection of herself in the mirror; the narrator, on the other hand, rejected the urge to look at herself "in mirrors, in others" (11). Everywhere, she seeks a thoroughgoing depreciation of the gaze—indeed, of the eyes. To deprive the gaze of the eyes that control it signifies shattering Narcissus' facade, as it were (132).

The final moments show the narrator, leaving the room of her sojourn, en route to yet another unclear destination. This disburdened traveller sits at an airport and, like Orlando, only carries along a manuscript. In this thematically open ending, quest takes precedence. The lesbian triangle now destroyed has been definitive for the narrator's sense of identity, but as a traveller, she

disavows any stable identity. The paradoxes embodied in the two goddesses, who have been not just muses but sources of total identification for the narrator, are invoked one last time. One last time reference is made to the ancient city of Ephesus in Asia Minor. It was not only domicile of the temple of Artemis, but also Heraclitus' birthplace. His philosophy combined contradictions just as fitting to this intertextual ending as those embodied in the goddesses'. His vision of life included paradox ("The sea is both purest and foulest" Frag. 61); opposites ("The way up and down is the same" Frag. 60); and flux (He compared all things to a river)—elements all openly embraced by this itinerant writer with a sense of identity caught between flux and flight.

Molloy's narrator's epigrammatic strategy is to inscribe a sexual/textual specificity largely absent from most familiar models, especially the Freudian, which postulate "normative femininity" as the proper resolution of the oedipal crisis. The result of the social process of engendering patterned after the normative Freudian resolution of the family romance results in the production of girls and boys who adjust to strictly polarized gender roles and conclusively heterosexual behaviors. Contrariwise, non-normative resolutions grant autonomy to the girl, inaugurate a new maternal relation and the possibility of oscillating between male and female and

between heterosexuality and female-identified lesbian or bisexual ties. Sara occupies an interesting corner of the triangular configuration she shares with the narrator's father and mother because she is not oppositional in the way they are. She is a hybrid who dissolves the tight knot that links female sexuality with dutiful reproduction just as Artemis/Diana subvert female sexuality understood as intimate binding of sexual pleasure with procreation as the Greeks construed it. Sara possesses the maternal instincts that Artemis/Diana lack, but she shares with them fertility without reproduction.

Notes

1. We'll pass without the parting
So to spare
Certificate of Absence —
Deeming where.

I left Her I could find Her
If I tried —
This way I keep from missing
Those that died.
2. A tangential discussion of the issue of the sick body in the novel is provided in Francine Maciello's "Mujer y estado social en la narrativa argentina." Maciello acknowledges that the body's unhealthy condition has subversive potential because, through sickness, the narrator takes the reigns of her own existence and defies an official context (the totalitarian government imposed by the Argentine military in the mid-seventies) aimed at "healing" (controlling) it. But Maciello totally ignores the fact that the unhealthy body is lesbian. Therefore her reading in this article as well as in a lengthier study devoted entirely to Molloy's novel (which I will undertake) is reductive and partial (164-165).
3. Adrienne Rich effectively opened the argument on the invisibility of lesbian existence within texts in "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (1980).
4. An interesting precedent for this strategy is found in Jane Marcus' "Sapphistory: The Woolf and the Well" (164-167).

CONCLUSION

[E]sa llave que supo usted encontrar, y sin la cual jamás entramos en posesión de nuestro tesoro . . . de nada puede servirme si no la encuentro por mí misma.

Victoria Ocampo, "Carta a Virginia Woolf."

This dissertation has documented the responses of three Spanish-American women writers to the Woolfian model. As world-travellers and avid readers in English as well as French, the literature of these languages was available to them as a source of inexhaustible inquiry. Within that source, the work of Woolf fuelled a fundamental imaginative act. For Ferré, Campos and Molloy, Woolf was a foremother who showed them one way of thinking critically about and aesthetically warring on the political, religious, and literary traditions that had treated women unfairly. This study leaves no question that Woolf's vision enhanced theirs. It opened a space heretofore unavailable. It told a story differently nuanced and, on occasion, it even attenuated their self-doubt. But their way deviated from Woolf's. Hers suited the British reality, not theirs.

As a contemporary of Woolf and feeling privileged to know her, Victoria Ocampo registered this fact in 1934, when

in a letter, she recollected an encounter with Woolf at Tavistock Square. At the time, the two women shared the warmth of a fire which dispelled the darkness and coldness outside and, in that intimacy, they examined and interrogated each other. Well aware of the differences between them, Ocampo acknowledged in a self-deprecatory manner that Woolf, as a consummate artist, had found the key that fitted the safely locked chest of treasures and she had not (Testimonios I 7-8). Keys were symbolic because they pried open private rooms—the rooms of one's own—and public ones—of libraries and universities—and publishing houses.

Even though Ocampo's social privilege made the metaphor of the room redundant in her case, she found Woolf's metaphor applicable at the core of her publishing impulses. So she found Borges as a translator of both A Room of One's Own—which Sur published from December 1935 to March 1936—and Orlando, which the magazine brought out shortly after. Finally, in 1938 To the Lighthouse was published. In spite of the financial hazard that these ventures sometimes represented, Sur "opened up new spaces in the cultural field for women writers, which would greatly benefit subsequent generations" (King 16-18).

A long time has passed since Ocampo wrote that letter, the prologue to her Testimonios. It is quite possible that her assessment of her long and fruitful career would have been different at the end. At that time she might have

acknowledged her possession of that key, for she was not without achievements of her own. To mention just two, she was one of three founding members of the Argentine Women's Union in 1936 and the first woman to be elected to the Argentine Academy of Letters in 1977.

Others, born of successive generations, in different latitudes and indeed of different privileges—social (Ferré), professional (Campos), academic (Molloy)—continued retroactively to identify and revise Woolf's theoretical strengths. So Ferré combined the recurring and dominant presence of women with an analysis of the historical status of her island. Campos inscribed Woolf's "sea novels" in a remote setting: off-shore her native Cuba. Finally, Molloy conceived of another way of thinking back through the maternal (the aunt) as a repository of memory and a source of inspiration. This dissertation has merely traced the contour of a vision that has clearly begun to emerge in different countries of Spanish-America. Full perception of the vision lies ahead. The fulfillment of its possibilities still further. No matter what the difficulties along the way of its realization, now these daughters—modelled on their mothers—dare to speak and to create, not with sympathy or unselflessness, but sometimes lawlessly, and always as outsiders ("Professions for Women" 57-63).

REFERENCES

- Achúgar, Hugo. "Notas para un debate sobre la crítica literaria latinoamericana." Casa de las Américas. 19: 110 (1978): 3-18.
- Alcoff, Linda. "Cultural Feminism Versus Poststructuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory." Signs 13, 3 (1988): 405-436.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers." This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color. Ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table, 1981. 165-173.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Baldwin, Dean R. Virginia Woolf: A Study of the Short Fiction. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. Ed. Michael Holoquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holoquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- - -. Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- - -. Rabelais and His World. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Barthes, Roland. S/Z. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Bassnett, Susan. "Coming out of the Labyrinth: Women Writers in Contemporary Latin American." On Modern Latin American Fiction. Ed. John King. New York: The Noonday Press, 1987. 247-267.
- Bauer, Dale. "Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival." Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Robyn Warhol and Diane P. Herndl. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991. 671-684.

- Bell, Robert E. Women in Classical Mythology: A Biographical Dictionary. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1991.
- Benjamin, Walter. Illuminations: Essays and Reflections. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.
- Bonnefoy, Yves. "Homage to Jorge Luis Borges." New Literary History, 21, 1 (1989): 163-173.
- Booth, Wayne. "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism." Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work. Ed. Gary S. Morson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986. 145-176.
- Borges, Jorge L. Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Essays. Ed. Donald Yates and James Irby. New York: New Directions Books, 1964.
- - -. Prologue. The Invention of Morel. By Adolfo Bioy Casares. Trans. Ruth Simms. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964. 5-7.
- Bowlby, Rachel, ed. Virginia Woolf. Harlow: Longman Group, Ltd. 1992.
- Bruce-Novoa, Juan. "La Sabina de Julieta Campos en el laberinto de la intertextualidad." La sartén por el mango. Ed. Patricia González y Eliana González. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1984.
- Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- - -. "The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary." Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 4 (1992): 133-171.
- Calinescu, Matei. Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitch, Postmodernism. Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.
- Campos, Julieta. La imagen en el espejo. Méjico: Universidad Autónoma de Méjico, 1985.

- - -. She Has Reddish Hair and Her Name Is Sabina: A Novel by Julieta Campos. Trans. Leland H. Chambers. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993.
- - -. Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina. Joaquín Mortiz: Nueva Narrativa Hispánica, 1974.
- Cantarella, Eva. "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece." The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives. Ed. Susan Suleiman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986. 57-67.
- Castro-Klarén, Sara, Sylvia Molloy, and Beatriz Sarlo, eds. Women's Writing in Latin America: An Anthology. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.
- Caws, Mary Ann. Women of Bloomsbury: Virginia, Vanessa and Carrington. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Chávez, Raúl Bueno. "Escribir en Hispanoamérica: Escribir Hispano-américa." Revista de crítica literaria hispano-americana, 11, 23 (1986): 103-113.
- Chevigny, Gale, and Gari Laguardia (eds.) Reinventing the Americas: Comparative Studies of Literature of the United States and Spanish America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Cranny-Francis, Anne. Feminist Fiction: Feminist Uses of Generic Fiction. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- Daly, Mary. Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- de Lauretis, Teresa. Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- - -. "Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation." Theatre Journal, 2, 40 (1988): 155-177.
- - -. Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- De Salvo, Louise. Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989.
- Derrida, Jacques. Positions. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

- du Plessis, Rachel. Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Fernández Olmos, Margarite. "Luis Rafael Sánchez and Rosario Ferré: Sexual Politics and Contemporary Puerto Rican Narrative." Hispania 70, 1 (1987): 40-46.
- Ferré, Rosario. Las dos Venecias. México: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 1992.
- - -. Fábulas de la garza desangrada. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1982.
- - -. Maldito amor. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1986.
- - -. Papeles de Pandora. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1979.
- - -. Sitio a Eros: Trece ensayos literarios. México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1986.
- - -. Sonatinas. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1989.
- - -. Sweet Diamond Dust. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- - -. "The Writer's Kitchen." Trans. Diana L. Vélez. Lives on the Line: The Testimony of Contemporary Latin American Authors. Ed. Doris Meyer. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- - -. The Youngest Doll. Trans. Rosario Ferré and Diana Vélez. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1991.
- Ferreira-Pinto, Cristina. "En breve cárcel: Escribiendo el camino del sujeto." Letras femeninas XV, 1-2 (1989): 75-82.
- Flores, Juan. Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993.
- Foster, David W. Gay and Lesbian Themes in Latin American Writing. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume One. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

- - -. "We 'Other Victorians.'" The Foucault Reader. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 292-300.
- Francescato, Martha P. "Un desafío a la crítica literaria: Tiene los cabellos roizos y se llama Sabina de Julieta Campos" Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana, 7, 13 (1981): 121-125.
- Franco, Jean. "Apuntes sobre la crítica feminista y la literatura hispanoamericana." Hispanérica, 15, 45 (1980): 31-43.
- - -. "Beyond Ethnocentrism: Gender, Power and the Third-World Intelligentsia." Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 503-515.
- - -. Introduction. The Youngest Doll. By Rosario Ferré. Trans. Rosario Ferré and Diana Vélez. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1991.
- - -. Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in México. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Friedman, Ellen, and Miriam Fuchs. Introduction. Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction. Ed. E. Friedman and M. Fuchs. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. 3-51.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Weavings: Intertextuality and the (Re)Birth of the Author." Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History. Ed. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. 146-180.
- García Pinto, Magdalena. "La escritura de la pasión y la pasión de la escritura: En breve cárcel de Sylvia Molloy." Revista Iberoamericana, 51 (1985): 687-696.
- Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "On Female Identity and Writing by Women." Writing and Sexual Difference. Ed. Elizabeth Abel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 177-191.
- Garfield, Evelyn Picón. "Tiene los cabellos roizos y se llama Sabina, de Julieta Campos." Eco, 248 (1982): 172-191.
- Giroux, Henry. Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education. New York: Routledge, 1992.

- Granata, María. "Inapresable autobiografía." El visitante. Buenos Aires: Editorial Abril, 1983. 130-140.
- Greenberg, Jane. "A Question of Blood." Women, Culture, and Politics in Latin America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Gugelberger, Georg. "Decolonizing the Canon: Considerations of Third World Literature." New Literary Theory, 22 (1991): 505-524.
- Hausman, Bernice. "Words between Women: Victoria Ocampo and Virginia Woolf." In the Feminine Mode: Essays on Hispanic Writers. Ed. N. Valis and C. Meier. Cranbury: Bucknell University Press, 1990. 204-226.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. Hamlet's Mother and Other Women. New York: Ballantine, 1990.
- . Writing a Woman's Life. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Hite, Molly. The Other Side of the Story: Structures and Strategies of Contemporary Feminist Narrative. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Hutcheon, Linda. The Politics of Postmodernism. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Irigaray, Luce. This Sex Which Is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jardine, Alice. Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Johnson, Barbara. Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine." Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism. Ed. G. Greene and C. Kahn. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Kamenszain, Tamara. El texto silencioso: tradición y vanguardia en la poesía sudamericana. México: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1983.

- Kaminsky, Amy. "Lesbian Cartographies: Body, Text and Geography." Cultural and Historical Grounding for Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Feminist Literary Criticism. Ed. Hernán Vidal. Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, 1989. 223-256.
- --. Reading the Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- King, John. "Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979): Precursor." Knives and Angels: Women Writers in Latin America. New York: Zed Books, 1990. 9-25.
- Kristeva, Julia. Revolution in Poetic Language. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Larrington, Carolyne, ed. The Feminist Companion to Mythology. London: Pandora Press, 1992.
- Laurence, Patricia Odek. The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf and the English Tradition. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Magnarelli, Sharon. The Lost Rib: Female Characters in the Spanish American Novel. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1985.
- Marcus, Jane. "Sapphistory: The Woolf and the Wall." Lesbian Texts and Contexts. Eds. Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow. New York: New York University Press, 1990.
- Martí, José. The America of José Martí: Selected Writings of José Martí. Trans. Juan de Onís. New York: Minerva Press, 1968.
- Martínez, Martha. "Julieta Campos o la interiorización de lo cubano." Revista Iberoamericana, 51 (1985): 793-797.
- Meyer, Doris. Victoria Ocampo: Against the Wind and the Tide. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.
- Mignolo, Walter. "Teorizar a través de fronteras culturales." Revista de crítica latinoamericana, 33 (1991): 103-112.
- Miller, Beth. Mujeres en la Literatura. México: Fleischer Editora, S.A., 1978.

- Miller, Francesca. "Latin American Feminism and the Transnational Arena." Women, Culture, and Politics in Latin America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
- Miller, Hillis J. "Narrative and History." English Language History, 41 (1974): 455-475.
- Miller, Nancy. "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader." Feminist Studies/Critical Studies. Ed. Teresa de Lauretis. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin, 1986. 102-120.
- . "Arachnologies: The Woman, the Text and the Critic." The Poetics of Gender. Ed. Nancy Miller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 270-295.
- Mistral, Gabriela. Gabriela piensa en ... Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1978.
- Modleski, Tania. Feminism Without Men: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Methuen and Co., 1985.
- Molloy, Sylvia. At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . Certificate of Absence. Trans. Daniel Balderston and Sylvia Molloy. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- . "Dos lecturas del cisne: Rubén Darío y Delmira Agustini." La sartén por el mango. Ed. P. González y E. Ortega. San Juan: Ediciones Huracán, 1984. 57-70.
- . En breve cárcel. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1981.
- Montero, Oscar. "En breve cárcel: la Diana, la violencia y la mujer que escribe." La sartén por el mango. Ed. Patricia González y Eliana Ortega. Río Piedra: Ediciones Huracán, 1984.

- Ocampo, Victoria. Virginia Woolf en su diario. Buenos Aires: Sur, 1954.
- - -. "Carta a Virginia Woolf." Testimonios I, 1920-1934. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Fundación Sur, 1981. 7-14.
- Ordoñez, Montserrat. "¿Qué le debo a Virginia Woolf?" El Espectador 413 (24 March 1991): 6-7.
- - -. "El oficio de escribir (a modo de conclusión)." Women Writers in Twentieth-Century Spain and Spanish America. Ed. Catherine Davies. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993. 209-213.
- Ortega y Gasset, José. The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture and Literature. Trans. Helene Weyl. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Palls, Terry L. "The Miracle of the Ordinary: Literary Epiphany in Virginia Woolf and Clarice Lispector." Luso-Brazilian Review, 21 (1984): 63-78.
- Pampillo, Gloria. "Un cuarto sin límites." Mujeres y escritura. Ed. Sylvia Etkin. Buenos Aires: Editorial Puro Cuento, 1989. 114-117.
- Picon Garfield, Evelyn. Women's Voices from Latin America: Interviewers with Six Contemporary Authors. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1987.
- Pizarro, Ana. La literatura latinoamericana como proceso. Segunda Reunión de Expertos. Brasil, 1983. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1985.
- - -. "Sobre las direcciones del comparativismo en América Latina." Casa de las Américas. 135 (1982): 40-49.
- Renza, Louis A. "Influence" Critical Terms for Literary Study. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. 186-202.
- Rico, Barbara, and Sandra Mano. American Mosaic: Multi-cultural Readings in Context. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.
- Rossaldo, Renato. Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Sarlo, Beatriz. Jorge Luis Borges: A Writer on the Edge. London: Verso, 1993.

Segura, Denise, and Jennifer Pierce. "Chicana/o Family Structure and Gender Personality: Chodorow, Familism and Psychoanalytic Sociology Revisited." Signs, 9, 1 (1993): 62-91.

Showalter, Elaine. A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Solá, María. "Habla femenina e ideología feminista en Papeles de Pandora de Rosario Ferré." Alero, 1, 1, 1982.

Stambolian, George and Elaine Marks, eds. Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/ Critical Texts. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979.

Stimpson, Catharine. Where the Meanings Are: Feminism and Cultural Spaces. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Van Gennep, Arnold. The Rites of Passage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.

Verani, Hugo. "Julietta Campos y la novela del lenguaje." Texto Crítico, 2, 5 (1975): 132-149.

Walker, Alice. In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993.

Walker, Cheryl. "Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author." Critical Inquiry 16 (1990): 551-571.

Waugh, Patricia. Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern. London: Routledge, 1989.

Woolf, Virginia. Between the Acts. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1941.

- - -. A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Margaret Homans. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1993.

- - -. The Common Reader. First Series. New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1925.

- - -. A Haunted House and Other Short Stories. 1921.
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972.
 - - -. The Letters of Virginia Woolf. Vol. 6. Ed. Nigel
Nicholson and Joanne Trautmann. New York: Harcourt
Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 6 Vol.
 - - -. Mrs. Dalloway. 1925. New York: Harcourt Brace
Jovanovich, 1990.
 - - -. A Room of One's Own. New York: Harcourt Brace
Jovanovich, 1929.
 - - -. The Waves. 1931. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books,
Ltd., 1969.
 - - -. Women and Writing. Ed. Michèle Barnett. New York:
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.
- Worton, Michael, and Judith Still, eds. Intertextuality:
Theories and Practices. Manchester: Manchester
University Press, 1991.
- Wright, Elizabeth. Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in
Practice. London: Methuen, 1984.
- Zimmerman, Bonnie. "What Has Never Been." Feminisms: An
Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Robyn
Warhol and Diane P. Herndl. New Brunswick: Rutgers
University Press, 1991. 117-137.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mónica Ayuso was born in Punta Alta, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on October 18, 1954. At age six, she started attending the British Cultural Institute in her hometown, an institution with which she was affiliated for nine years as a student and for three years as a teacher. She continued her specialization in English as a Second Language at Instituto Superior del Profesorado "Juan XXIII." Upon graduation with a B.A. in 1978, she taught linguistics and phonetics there.

In 1980 she moved to the United States under the auspices of the Jacksonville Sister Cities Association and with a subsidy from Instituto "Juan XXIII." Here she obtained a Master of Education degree in 1982 from the University of North Florida. Immediately thereafter she defined her future commitment to the study of literature. She graduated with a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Florida in 1984. After completing course work for a Ph.D. in English, she returned to her native Argentina. In 1988 she resumed work on her Ph.D. degree in Florida while she taught at various institutions.

She balances—not always successfully—a philological nature, leaning towards a life of the mind, with a passion

for long-distance running. In the future she has two goals: to work in both English and Spanish, following the impetus this dissertation has given her, and to train for her first marathon.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Brandon Kershner, Chairman
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Andrés Avellaneda, CoChairman
Professor of Romance
Languages and Literature and
Latin American Studies

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Gregory Ulmer
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Alistair Duckworth
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Daniel Cottom
Professor of English

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1994

Dean, Graduate School